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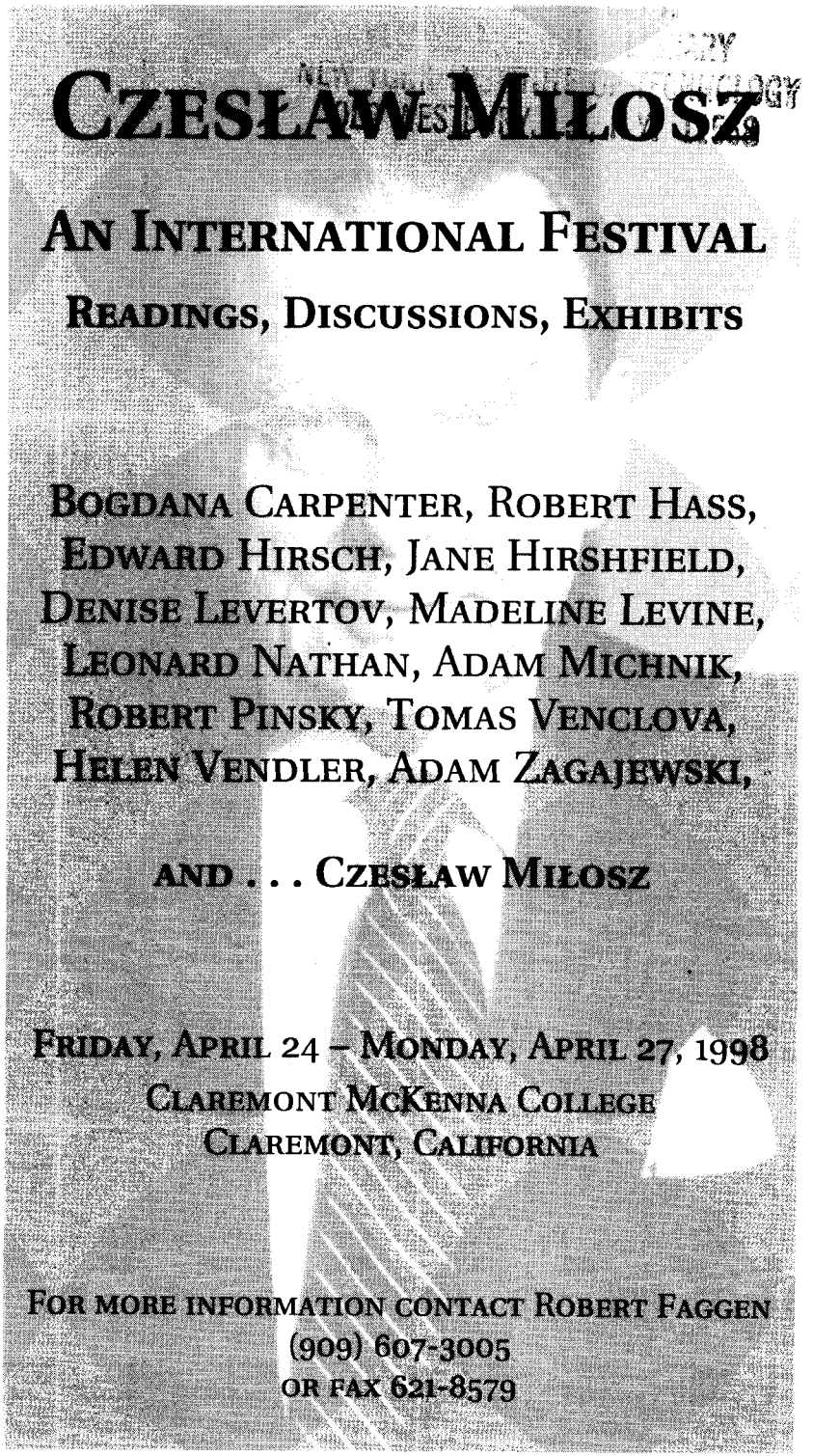

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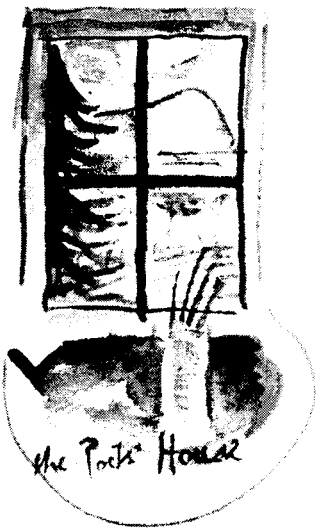

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COMMENTS

The debate over the NEA is superficial and confused, because the real issue is not discussed by either President Clinton, who favors keeping the NEA, or the Republicans, who want to abolish it. There's nothing wrong with government support of the arts. In fact all great nations have funded serious art. The trouble with the situation here is that the administration of the NEA has given grants to trendy and offensive individuals and projects. And this has taken place under both Democratic and Republican presidencies. The NEA could fruitfully be continued if there was some way of getting rid of the administration and choice of panels by politically correct academics and performers. But of course this is not easy since a good part of our culture is controlled by far-out and politically correct people. In the abstract, the general question of how to choose the right people is something of a conundrum, since one could always ask who chooses the people who choose the panelists. But sophisticated artists, writers, and critics can tell the difference between genuine and fraudulent projects. I hope this can be done, but if not I'm afraid the NEA will no longer be able to serve a useful purpose.

The comparison by Morris Dickstein of Gore Vidal's critical work with that of Edmund Wilson goes beyond the norms of the literary history assumed in our editorial policies. To me, the comparison seems to represent a radical, revisionist view of the world of criticism, or at least some ideological bias. Edmund Wilson's criticism had gaps and flaws, but he was a major figure. The comparison of John Updike with Wilson is also somewhat of a stretch, but is arguable.

COMMENDATIONS Saul Bellow's new novella *The Actual* (Viking) shows him to be at the height of his powers. It is a masterly narrative of characters and situations revolving around each other—like the themes in a fugue. One of Bellow's achievements is to tell a complex story through colloquial tones and rhythms. I wish, as I've said, that Bellow would undertake a portrait of our culture and the people who dominate it.

Philip Roth's new novel *American Pastoral* (Houghton Mifflin) is a long *tour de force.* It is a symbolic and personal picture of the clash between the traditional and the ultra-radical world that has taken place in the last thirty or forty years. Especially telling is his story of the mad revolutionary logic that led the extreme left and the Weathermen particularly to their crazy deeds.

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Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt (Simon and Schuster) is a sad and funny memoir of an impoverished Irish family. The writing is superb and evokes the flavor of the artist's underworld. My only reservation is that the story is repetitious and does not go beyond the spitting-out of details.

Whittaker Chambers by Sam Tanenhaus (Random House) is a first-rate biography of Whittaker Chambers. It's a marvel of research, of calm judgment, and political insight. Particularly noteworthy is Tanenhaus's avoidance of political polemics and ideological argument. It is a superb study of a complex character and his relation to the Communist underground. And especially effective is Tanenhaus's method of letting the facts tell the story.

W.P.

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ROBERT MICHELS

Psychoanalysis and Its Critics

Edith Kurzweil: We are gathered here to ask Dr. Michels some questions about the state of psychoanalysis. As most of you know, he is not only one of the most renowned training analysts affiliated with the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training, but is Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry at the Cornell Medical College as well. We have invited him here to explain some of the issues that are fundamental to the controversies surrounding Freud's legacy and that seem to be central to current thinking and practice by all sorts of Freudian and anti-Freudian therapists, and by the public at large. When he agreed to address us, Dr. Michels said that he would prefer to answer a number of lead-in questions rather than give a formal talk; and that he would then elaborate on the roots and ramifications of the currently hot topics some of our audience may want him to pursue. Following are some of these questions which, I think, may clarify some of the confusions that are rampant in our culture. In fact, the distinctions between what Freud said, what one or another of his followers maintained and what his critics imputed to him are unclear to most non-analysts among us, as well as to many therapists. Actually, psychoanalysis primarily is besieged from three sides: by literary critics who no longer debate and explore the issues in the way Lionel Trilling and William Phillips did with practicing analysts such as Heinz Hartmann and Ernst Kris, by philosophers such as Adolph Grünbaum, whose main argument is that it is not a science because it cannot be properly falsified, and by some of the medical profession who find that advances in drug therapy have made psychoanalysis too expensive in both time and money. As we know, psychoanalysts sometimes have played into their critics' hands when explaining their reservations in terms of personal or societal symptoms. Therefore, I will begin by posing three sets of questions, which I am sure will be followed by others from some of you.

1.) Dr. Michels, when you publicly debated the state of psychoanalysis with the literary critic Frederick Crews, one of the most formidable foes of psychoanalysis within the culture, you rebutted his contention that psychoanalysis has been a fraud; and you argued that it cannot be blamed for all sorts of societal ills it has nothing to do with. For instance, Crews maintains that the recovered memory movement, with all its consequences, is linked to Freud or derives from him. How do you explain this sleight of hand, how do you interpret the current proliferation of real and imagined child abuse?

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2.) As we know, Grünbaum leads the discussion in arguing that psychoanalysis is not scientific and is contaminated by suggestion. Without getting into the philosophical details, could you comment on whether the old discussion of psychoanalysis as an art or as a science still has much value. In other words, now that most psychoanalysts employ a variety of psychoanalytic methods with their patients—self-psychology, ego psychology, object relations, and so on, and derivations and mixtures of them all—is this question at all relevant?

3.) I assume that in your roles as physician, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst you must, after diagnosing a patient, decide what type of approach to take in order to help him or her get better or be happier as quickly as possible. How do you decide whether to use one or more of the new mind-altering drugs, to employ short-term or long-term therapy, or a combination of both?

In a more general vein, how do you perceive the state of psychoanalysis? What do you foresee as its role in the near and the distant future, and how do you explain the growing criticism of psychoanalysis, especially at a moment when its ideas are permeating most of our culture?

Robert Michels: Much of this comes down to the same question, which is "why is everyone so angry at psychoanalysis?" Why all the criticisms, why all the attacks, why—starting with Frederick Crews and ending up with my medical and psychiatric colleagues—is everyone so down on psychoanalysis? I'm not sure I know the answer. I don't think that this is a psychoanalytic question. It seems to me that psychoanalysis has become a very convenient social symbol for lots of things. People are angry at it for whatever it might mean to them. Some people are angry because psychoanalysis has failed to solve the problems of psychiatric illness and of all other existing social problems. Nor has it provided an understanding of the mind, or of society. Other people are angry at it because they once loved it, which made them feel distressed and enraged at realizing that they once overvalued something they shouldn't have overvalued, so they turn against it. There are all kinds of reasons why people might be angry at it. I think it is important not to dismiss all of them because there are some very important criticisms and perspectives embedded in many of the angry attacks. I think we should be curious about the content of the attacks, not expect them all to be relevant, but not dismiss them all because some of them aren't relevant.

Let's start with the Crews debate. Professor Crews wrote a book in which he attacks psychoanalysis primarily because he looked at the recovered memory and the false memory syndrome movements. It is a complicated book and beautifully written. I am envious of his literary skills and of the way he constructed his arguments. But there was not much about

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psychoanalysis in the book. Its basic premise is that there is some close relationship between psychoanalytic thinking and the flood of interest in recovered memories of child abuse. That is simply untrue. There has been a great deal of interest in these memories among various kinds of mental health therapists, feminists, and people worried about our society in general. They are concerned about child abuse, about the treatment of victims of child abuse, about the possibility that some people who are abused don't have clear memories of the abuse, and that some of those people may later regain memories of the abuse, while others may believe they are regaining memories of previous abuse that in fact never occurred, and may, because of that, do all kinds of dreadful things, attacking their parents or others who in fact are innocent. Although there has been a lot of interest and writing on these matters, very little of it has been by psychoanalysts, and very little of it is even informed by psychoanalytic thinking.

There are a couple of reasons for this: One is that most psychoanalytic patients are not drawn from the populations that are most likely to be victims or allegers of child abuse. Another is that most of the treatments suggested for those problems are not predominantly psychoanalytic in nature, they are informed by other traditions of psychotherapy. Probably the most ironic reason, in terms of Crews's attack, is that through most of its history psychoanalysis has been attacked from the other side for being overly ready to attribute memories of abuse to the elaborations of childhood fantasy rather than to the recall of actual occurrences in childhood. That is, most criticisms of psychoanalysis have argued that it undervalues the importance of "real" childhood trauma rather than exaggerating it and discovers it when it's not there. The recovered memory issue is a contemporary issue that says something about our society, something about psychiatric treatment, and something about the impact of childhood events on adult problems. But, in fact, if there's an interaction with psychoanalysis it is that it points out the relative failure of psychoanalysis, at least in some periods of its history, to pay enough attention to the significance of real traumatic experiences in childhood and the pathology that results from them.

The reason for this goes back to a discovery that Freud made one hundred years ago. He realized that accounts of trauma from some patients that he had believed to be true were more likely vivid memories of childhood fantasies, which patients reported and experienced as real but which, in fact, never occurred. At that point, he shifted his attention from the actual traumatic events in the lives of some unfortunate children to the fantasies of childhood which can be mistaken for memories of traumatic events and psychoanalysis as we know it today was born.

The fact that children are traumatized isn't a discovery of psychoanalysis, although it is certainly important, and may be central to the lives of

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many people. The fact that children have intense, vivid fantasies at very early ages, which take the form of experiences which could have been traumatic had they occurred, *that* is a discovery of psychoanalysis. It is not more or less important than real trauma, but it is certainly far more prevalent than real childhood trauma. Childhood fantasies are ubiquitous, universal. Severe childhood trauma, particularly sexual trauma, is a tragic but relatively uncommon event. So psychoanalysis's discovery of a universal psychological phenomenon is quite different, and in some ways on the other side of the debate than Crews's attack would suggest.

Why is Crews so angry? I can't answer that. I don't know him very well: I met him the night of the debate and have not seen him since. He marshalls a series of arguments, but I question how much weight we should give them. One of the arguments is that there are things about Freud's personal life that make him less than ideal. True, without getting into details, Freud wasn't ideal. Secondly, that Freud's scientific method was significantly flawed. Also true. Crews is unfair in that he uses contemporary standards for evaluating the methodology of clinical research of one hundred years ago and he's unfair in that he discounts Freud's method of discovery because it was not accompanied by an adequate method of validation. On balance, Freud was not a great behavioral scientist in terms of methodological purity or sophistication. My response to that would be, who cares? If the scientific database of contemporary psychoanalysis were Freud's work of one hundred years ago and there had been no repetition, confirmation, or other data to support it, it would be of no interest whatsoever today. If today there's a body of knowledge to support it, who cares whether the first hypothesis was based on rigorously collected, carefully analyzed, valid data? Mendel's data were seriously flawed. No contemporary geneticist would worry about that. If we discovered that Newton's data or Copernicus's data were seriously flawed we'd find that a historical amusement, not a credible attack on physics or astronomy. I believe Crews is employing faulty logic in equating the scientific basis of psychoanalysis in 1997 with the methodological purity of Freud's work in 1897.

He also complains that psychoanalysis is inherently based on suggestion, which contaminates its data base in a way that makes it impossible to analyze its claims scientifically. He explicitly borrows this complaint from Adolph Grünbaum. What it says, in effect, is that when a therapist talks to a patient, regardless of the purity or contamination of the therapist's motives, the therapist can either intentionally or inadvertently, by the way he or she asks questions or seems interested or directs attention, plant ideas rather than discover them, suggest answers rather than get the patients answers and convince both the patient and the therapist that what seems to grow out of therapeutic inquiry in fact pre-existed in the mind of the ther-

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apist and was implanted there by the theory that guided the inquiry. I would say this is true. It is a major discovery of psychoanalysis. Crews doesn't go into this, but it is, of course, true of all therapies. It isn't that psychoanalytic therapy is vulnerable to suggestion and there are therapies that aren't, it's that psychoanalytic therapy is almost unique in its immense concern about the possibility of suggestion, its attempt to account for suggestion in the process of treatment, and in its curiosity about the basis for suggestion. In a sense the difference between psychoanalysis and many other psychotherapies is that other psychotherapies work by suggesting healthy behavior, while psychoanalysis works by exploring the patient's attempt to transform the therapy into suggestion. Instead of exploiting the patient's willingness to receive suggestions, psychoanalysis uses that willingness to liberate the patient from his or her dependency on external suggestions. Psychoanalysis is different from the other therapies in that it tries to use suggestibility as a lever for freeing people from their vulnerability to suggestion rather than exploiting it as a lever for helping people. Does that make it immune to the danger of suggestion? No. There is no way to make it immune. Is it possible that a well-meaning analyst will inadvertently make suggestions that patient and analyst will later believe to be true? Of course it is possible. Is there any way to guarantee that that doesn't happen and that the data are "safe" and guarded from all possible contamination? No way that I know of. What we are saying is that the data of psychoanalysis, like that of all other therapies we know, are susceptible to the contamination of suggestion. It is, unlike other therapies, preoccupied with trying to reduce that contamination. But there is no assurance that it can be totally successful at that.

What does this mean for the status of psychoanalysis? For Grünbaum the problem of suggestibility is virtually a fatal flaw destroying its potential as a natural science. This involves several assumptions. One is that the data we are talking about are the data of statements made in analytic sessions. Is it essential that those statements are scientific hypotheses that can be proved or disproved like hypotheses in physics or chemistry if psychoanalysis is to be a science? Grünbaum seems to believe that it is and Crews accepts Grünbaum's position that if we can't test the scientific validity of interpretations made in analytic sessions then analysis is not scientific.

There are other points of view. One would challenge that particular definition of science. Grünbaum is borrowing from Karl Popper who believed that science required the falsifiability of hypotheses. This is an important view, but it is not the only view of what science is. It is not even the most popular view today. An alternative would define science as something that generates an interesting strategy for discovery, inquiry, learning, and validation through models or theories or hypotheses. The notion of falsifiability as the core criteria is too narrow a concept of science. Still

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another challenge to the Grünbaum/Crews position is that what is scientific about psychoanalysis isn't the interpretation made by an analyst during a session about something that was said by the patient. What is scientific about psychoanalysis is whether a therapeutic process guided by the theory that generates those interpretations makes a difference to patients' lives, whether it works, whether it works better than a therapy guided by some other set of ideas or hypotheses. I would say that if a psychoanalytic set of theories guided psychoanalysts all over the world in treating patients who got better more consistently when treated by that model than when treated by other therapies, then I would be untroubled by the fact that no single interpretation could be validated in a way that makes Grünbaum happy.

Going back to Crews: we've talked about his recovered memory argument, we've talked about the Freud as a person argument, we've talked about Freud's scientific methodology argument, and we've talked about the scientific status of contemporary psychoanalysis. I think those are probably the major issues he raises in his papers. To me the central problem I can't understand goes beyond Crews: it is the venom as opposed to the intellectual critique that's embedded in his arguments. I can easily imagine people sitting in a room discussing whether or not psychoanalytic clinical methodology is consistent with Popper's notion of the nature of science, but I have trouble understanding people doing this with rage, passion and hatred, that is with the affect that is apparent in his book. I can't explain where it comes from. I suspect that this actually may be a psychoanalytic question, perhaps the only one the book really raises, but I don't have the relevant data to address it. I do have one fragment of data: decades earlier Crews was on the other side of the debate, rather naïvely defending psychoanalysis as a scientific psychology, claiming that its scientific status was equivalent to behavioral psychology and arguing passionately on its behalf. I would speculate that the characteristics that lead one to passionate over-idealization also lead one to passionate de-idealization, but that's only an *ad hominem* argument.

Why has psychoanalysis been the target of so much other cultural criticism, attack, and interest? My impression is that very little of it has to do with what psychoanalysts think psychoanalysis is. For example, many people who feel that our society is too "permissive," or that there is an unfortunate tendency to exculpate people from personal responsibility for various kinds of actions, or to explain away evil behavior through developmental or psychodynamic formulations, or to dilute our concept of personal morality link all of those trends to psychoanalysis. I think they mean that something has happened in the last one hundred years that allows us to think of people in ways that seem to diminish the importance of the moral perspective in viewing their behavior and think of their

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behavior in frameworks that distract us from moral evaluation. I suspect that's true in many ways. In some sense, of course, psychoanalysis is part of that tradition. However, I don't think it's the cause. Psychoanalytic theory just doesn't lead to that kind of conclusion. However, psychoanalysis may have become a symbol for the shift from a moral lens through which we view the activities of others to some other kind of lens which can be used for moral exculpation and that upsets a lot of people. They attack psychoanalysis in a way that might be valid except what they are attacking isn't really psychoanalysis, it is a symbol for something else.

I was at a meeting earlier today at which we were discussing the history of psychiatry in the nineteenth century. The speaker argued that psychiatry got a very bad reputation in American medicine because psychiatrists were always promising cures they never delivered, while other physicians were more circumspect. When you look into why psychiatrists were so optimistic in their public statements you discover something familiar to us today. Psychiatric treatment has been based on public funding, while the rest of medicine is privately funded. One obtains public funding by claiming that more dollars will lead to wonderful social benefits—curing the sick, getting the mentally ill off the streets, etc. As psychiatrists became skillful at the government budget appropriation game they made more and more promises they couldn't keep. We live with the secondary effects of that. I think that in an analogous way there was an unfortunate early tendency to promise things that psychoanalysis might do.

During World War II American military psychiatrists were heavily influenced by psychoanalytic thinking. Dr. Menninger was a psychoanalyst and the chief of Army psychiatry, and psychoanalytically-informed training was seen as the most potent and scientific strategy for transforming general physicians so they could go to the battlefield and function as psychiatrists in time of war. They learned a little bit about psychoanalytic thinking, and then went to the battlefield and saw soldiers who were in acute mental distress due to the trauma of war. They used their newly learned theory to treat their patients and were amazingly successful, in great part because they were treating people with an excellent prognosis. If persons who are acutely distressed and have had a traumatic experience are separated from the trauma and treated nicely they will get better. These same doctors then came back to the States excited and enthusiastic about the power of the new psychiatric theory they had learned and eager to use it for all kinds of psychiatric patients, including those with chronic, serious mental illnesses. Their enthusiasm was genuine and infectious; many were trained in this psychoanalytic dynamic psychiatry; they found ready-made heroes in a group of brilliant European psychoanalysts who had moved to this country just before the war. There was great excitement and enthu-

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siasm for this new treatment that was going to revolutionize American psychiatry. It didn't work, or, to be more precise, what worked on the battlefield with acute shellshock was useless in the state hospitals with chronic, seriously mentally ill patients. When other treatments for the major psychoses came along a decade or two later, they were seen as correcting an error or undoing something that had been wrong in American psychiatry. There was a reaction against psychoanalysis in the medical and psychiatric community that in some ways continues until this day. Probably there was too much enthusiasm in the beginning, followed by too much of a negative reaction later. More recently we have begun to face negative reactions to failures of the new treatments that replaced psychoanalysis, which also never lived up to their initial promise. In medicine new treatments last for a few decades, and when they fail newer treatments come along and replace them. Psychoanalysis was one of those new treatments.

You asked me what one does with a patient. Before 1960, essentially we had only psychoanalytic psychotherapy as a potentially effective treatment in psychiatry. Psychoanalysis and psychotherapy based on psychoanalysis were attempts to help people change, to cure their problems. Most of the other ways of helping psychiatric patients were attempts to take care of them rather than to cure them. We could be humane to them, we could comfort them, we could sedate them, but we didn't have medicines that directly attacked or reversed their illnesses and we didn't have psycho-social interventions that were more than supportive, caretaking, and comforting.

Psychoanalysis was immensely exciting in this setting because it not only offered a way to take care of people humanely, but also to understand the underlying causes of their problems, to have an intervention that was designed not simply to support them, but to modify their disease or their symptoms and change them so they were improved or cured. It was dramatically ineffective with the major psychoses such as schizophrenia, or manic-depressive disease. However, it was often quite effective with a great many neurotic disorders, symptomatic anxiety disorders, and character problems. A psychiatrist had a simple choice in 1955: did the patient have a chance at psychoanalysis or psychodynamic psychotherapy? If so, that was the prescription. If not, how could you make them most comfortable, remove them from danger, and be humane in treating them? That was the basic question of diagnosis and prescription. As a consequence there was extremely little interest in diagnosis. For practical purposes there were only two different categories: analyzable or not analyzable.

In time a number of other treatments became available. Our first medications were little more refined than the sedatives we had in the last century. However, now we have drugs that aren't really sedatives, although

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they sedate people who are psychotic, but they don't work as sedatives in people who aren't psychotic. They are "normalizing," anti-psychotics rather than general depressants. We have drugs that aren't really stimulants, although they stimulate people who are depressed and make them feel more normal. We have other drugs that have minimal effect on normal people but quiet manic patients and seem, therefore, to have a rather specific anti-manic, but not sedating activity. More recently we have developed drugs that have specific effects on obsessive-compulsive disease, on specific aspects of schizophrenic syndromes. So the modern psychiatrist has therapeutic choices. Should I give a patient psychoanalytic therapy, or one of these various medications which might help their disease, or only provide them with humane care?

We also have a number of people who, intrigued by the potential of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy but troubled by its relative failure in treating the major severe mental illnesses, have developed psychotherapies which are psychoanalytically flavored but not really psychoanalytic. Some are not designed to deal with the totality of the person as psychoanalysis is, but rather to treat specific disorders, such as major depressive disorder, panic disorder, or obsessive-compulsive disorder. Such treatments may be more effective for these specific disorders than psychoanalytic psychotherapy is. As a result, a contemporary psychiatrist who has seen a patient has a more complex set of choices to make: should the patient be analyzed or get psychoanalytic psychotherapy, should he/she receive one of the four or five different kinds of medication now available, or should we prescribe one of the psychotherapies which isn't analytic, but which borrows from analytic ideas and is designed to treat a patient's specific disorder. This also means that it is much more important to be specific in that initial assessment and to determine the diagnosis. In 1955 the treatments for mania and schizophrenia were identical. There was no need to worry about the precise diagnosis, because it didn't make any difference.

In 1997 the treatments are entirely different. We become extremely concerned about the precision of differential diagnoses. Similarly some of our psychotherapies today are quite specific. The diagnostic and appraisal process has become more complicated than it used to be.

So what do you do in 1997? You meet patients, find out what's bothering them, ask them about their problems, get all the history you can about the problems they've had before, find out which problems have been in their family, not only because families are important to people, but because we have a much more sophisticated appreciation of the way in which some psychiatric problems run in families and therefore we can make a more accurate diagnosis if we know what problems their fathers, mothers, aunts, and uncles had. You determine whether they have a major

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psychiatric disorder, which one, what the nature of their character structure is, what their assets are, what their potential is, etc. We then go to our array of treatments and ask the questions we've already talked about. Is the patient analyzable, can this patient profit from a psychoanalytic psychotherapy, are there medications that would help one of the disorders this patient might have, are there other psychotherapies that might be helpful? We decide which things on our list might be of use to this person. Personally, my next step is to tell the patient what I've found. I say, "It seems to me that this is what you told me, these are the problems you talked about, this is the story you told me, it seems you suffer from these disorders, you have these life patterns, and we have the following treatments available, and these are the pros and cons of those treatments. How can I help you decide which of these you'd like?"

You then have the patient make an informed choice among the available options, ideally with the doctor acting as a consultant and resource person in that choice and then helping the patient get to the person who can best administer the treatment. I think when there was only one treatment, the doctor was often in the position of getting the patient to agree to that treatment. I think that for some patients there still is only one treatment, but there are a great many for whom there are alternatives and the doctor's role then is to help the patient become as informed as possible in order to make the best decision. Clearly, the decision is going to be made by the patient. There is a bit of a paradox in this, because the decision-making organ can be involved in the disease. That has to be taken into account and part of the skill of the consultant is to help the patient make a decision, while at the same time making the patient aware of and protecting him from the way the problem itself might contaminate that decision. That is a long, long answer to the last question.

Clearly, psychoanalysis in its pure form is an appropriate treatment for only a small minority of patients. It is suitable for someone who has the capacity and the motivation to participate in the treatment, has enough resources in his or her psychological life to be maintained through its pains and frustrations, is not suffering so acutely that he or she needs more comforting and reassurance than can be a part of the psychoanalytic process, and who can't be helped by another treatment that would be quicker and more effective. In my experience that means it is appropriate for only a minority of people.

Most people who want help with their problems shouldn't be in analysis. Some should. There are a lot of people who seek help. There is no shortage of people who can be helped by analysis, just as there is no shortage of people who can be helped by other treatments. There is a shortage of treatments available rather than a shortage of patients. At the

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same time, the psychoanalytic community—the clinical part of the community, not the part that worries about whether it is a science or a hermeneutic strategy, whether Freud's data was methodologically sound, or who have read Adolph Grünbaum's latest book—the part of the community that treats patients has been very interested in trying to expand the range of people who can be helped by psychoanalytic treatment. They no longer try in the same way as in the post-war period, by applying it to chronic major psychoses, but rather in expanding it at its margins. Freud started one hundred years ago in treating people with symptomatic neuroses, first with conversion symptoms, then with phobias, obsessions, and anxiety attacks, and then expanded it to people with character disorders which are modeled on the same kinds of conflicts, defense mechanisms and dynamics as those symptomatic neuroses. Today there is a great deal of interest in looking at patients with more pervasive, more primitive, more severe character pathology—pathology which is not major mental illness, not psychosis, but involves dynamics that go beyond the kind that Freud and his immediate followers understood and treated. These are people with major problems that are pervasive in their lives and human relationships, impaired capacities for pleasure, and a disturbed experience of self. We have developed psychoanalytic techniques for treating and helping such patients—in fact, the majority of clinical advances in psychoanalysis in the last few decades have been devoted to this task, to the treatment of patients with borderline or narcissistic personality disorders.

In summary, compared to a few decades ago we have many more treatments in psychiatry, some of which are very good. There are many conditions for which more than one treatment is available. We've expanded the domain of patients for whom psychoanalytic treatments are useful and, at our best, we try to help patients select among the choices they have.

There has been some change in our thinking over the century on whether psychoanalysis is viewed as art or as science. Freud clearly wanted psychoanalysis to be a science. That probably says something about his idealization of science and the status of science at the turn of the century. Freud saw the mind essentially as an organ, like the liver or the spleen, an organ which functioned by its own biological rules and had its own physiology. Behavior, both normal and pathologic, can be understood by knowing how this organ functions. Freud saw mental phenomena as biological phenomena. The clinical thinking and the treatment he developed involved listening to patients, talking to them, trying to understand what they said, searching for hidden meanings in what they were saying, and discovering or hypothesizing or constructing meanings out of the dialogue that evolved between him and his patients. But in a sense he did all of this in passing. If you were to tell Freud that he was involved in the construc-

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tion of meanings by imaginatively rewording the dialogue that went on between himself and his patient, he would probably reject that description of what he was doing. He thought he was discovering preexisting meanings in the patient's mind, meanings that were the derivatives of underlying biological processes in the patient's nervous system. By manipulating those meanings he could affect the underlying biological processes and therefore affect his patient. As psychoanalysis matured the biological hypotheses failed to be very generative; they didn't lead to valuable ideas, new treatments, or biological discoveries. They did provide an immensely rich metaphoric source for clinical thinking, but not a set of ideas that bridged biology and psychology.

Psychoanalysts began to "de-biologize" psychoanalysis and to employ it more and more as a purely psychological method of inquiry, discovery and treatment. In contemporary psychoanalysis there is very little meaningful biology, only the historic origins of the metaphors that dominate it. In fact, if you want to understand psychoanalysis in 1997, the biology of 1897 is more important than the biology of 1997. Every once in a while somebody attempts a translation of contemporary psychoanalytic concepts to contemporary cognitive science or contemporary neurobiology. This is possible, but it doesn't lead to progress, only a demonstration that the translation can be made. Psychoanalytic ideas stem from an earlier biology, but they are not biological.

If this is so, how do we understand the process in which analysts are involved? One way of thinking about it is to say that Freud had it wrong and the psychoanalysts were naïve enough to accept his view. Psychoanalysis is neither biology nor science, it is a different kind of enterprise altogether. It is legitimate, it is scholarly, it is fascinating, but it is an enterprise involved in searching for, perhaps constructing, and translating meanings. It is a hermeneutic rather than a natural scientific activity. This is immensely appealing, especially to those analysts who for generations have felt guilty about not being good scientists and who had suddenly learned they were wrong: they were not bad scientists, but rather gifted hermeneuticists—skilled in the interpretation of symbolic language. This is reassuring and leads to much more pleasant gatherings, and all kinds of secondary advantages. It also leads to some discomfort. It is less comfortable to suggest that you have a treatment for a disease, when you think of yourself as co-constructing metaphors together with the patient, rather than seeking out the roots of abnormal brain function as reflected by verbal productions and helping to correct it. It also leads to concern about appropriate professional, scientific and intellectual colleagues. If you see psychoanalysis as rooted in a scientific base, you can screen out people who don't know or understand science. But if you see it as an activity of con-

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structing meanings, then the rules aren't as clear. Who decides which meanings are illegitimate and shouldn't be constructed by psychoanalysts, who is a non-psychoanalytic meaning constructor, who is not allowed to attend the innermost circles and become accepted as an analyst? Boundary control becomes very troubling: how does a hermeneutic psychoanalyst differentiate himself from anyone else who translates symbols and constructs meanings? These issues are being widely discussed.

I think many analysts have accepted that what they do in their consultation room is far more a hermeneutic than a scientific activity. Many of them would hold, however, that they are doing it to have an impact on the world, changing patients, or curing them, or altering their character in a way that can be measured, at least in theory, and evaluated as more or less effective. They would argue that their search for meaning is guided by specific metaphoric principles that are the traditional theories of psychoanalysis, of psychoanalytic development, of psychosexuality, of libido theory and of the major unconscious fantasies of our species. These guidelines work because they are rooted in facts about human beings and are not merely arbitrary choices. The rootedness in those facts stems from centuries of experience. Thus there are external scientific boundaries that limit the metaphors and the hermeneutic games that analysts play, and are based on our knowledge about people. Of course, these questions are something that the philosophers and metaphysicians of psychoanalysis think about, not something that troubles practicing analysts very much. If I were to interrupt one of my colleagues in the middle of a session and say, "the last interpretation you made, was that a scientific hypothesis based on our knowledge of development or were you constructing a meaning in a hermeneutical process?" He would likely reply, "wait a minute, I'm busy," and go back to his work untroubled about the distinction between these processes.

Morris Dickstein: There were some brilliant suggestions about suggestibility and the scientific use of suggestibility in psychoanalysis and also about the hermeneutic process, but you began by conceding many of the substantive points that the critics have made and concluded by locating psychoanalysis more as an art than a science. This is a momentous shift in the way psychoanalysts locate themselves on the cultural and therapeutic map. I wonder to what extent this is a response to some of the failures you describe or a relocation based on the criticism. In other words, if they are aiming at scientific falisifiability, well, let's relocate ourselves where we are more comfortable. I wonder to what extent psychoanalysis has moved away from the territory that's under fire to pitch its tents in an area which is not vulnerable to the same kinds of criticism.

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Robert Michels: You're asking me about the social history of psychoanalysis. I am not an expert, but my impression is that it hasn't actually happened that way. The growth of interest in seeing psychoanalysis as hermeneutic rather than a natural science comes from within the core of psychoanalysis. Paul Ricoeur was probably the one who started the dialogue. People at the heart of the psychoanalytic community—Roy Schaefer in New York would be an example—became fascinated by the value of this model of the process of analysis, as they were rejecting, for internal reasons within the analytic dialogue, some of the former natural science concepts.

One of the central figures in the explicit formulation of the natural scientific theory of psychoanalysis was David Rappaport. He wrote the definitive theoretical textbook. Interestingly, several of the leaders in the reformulation of psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic rather than a natural scientific activity were Rappaport's major students. Now, one can make interpretations about rebelling against fathers and all that, but from the standpoint of intellectual history, they were the ones who pushed the natural science model to its limit. They were troubled by its limitations and searched for other ways to think about what they were doing. They were certainly richly influenced by changes in the cultural and intellectual world in which they lived, and in which it was acceptable not to be a scientist. In some ways psychoanalysis was eagerly waiting to disavow its status as a pure natural science, but waited until it would not be removed from the intellectual world by doing so. I don't think the changes were primarily in response to external criticism. Grünbaum, for example, who has been a major critic of psychoanalysis as a natural science, is actually far more hostile to the model of psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic discipline.

Morris Dickstein: When you described Crews as having fallen into a naïve idealization decades ago, that position is something which most of the psychoanalytic community then would have gone along with. So, in fact, psychoanalysis itself was at another place at that time. Crews has moved one hundred and eighty degrees. I think psychoanalysis has moved ninety degrees.

Robert Michels: Certainly thirty or forty years ago the psychoanalytic community was much more eager to defend its natural science status and embraced any outsider who agreed with it. It was also much more homogenous, with a much narrower range of views. Those two things have changed radically.

Edith Kurzweil: To what extent to you think psychoanalysis has changed in terms of diagnoses? Freud started out treating hysterics, and then, to put it very globally, came diagnoses of obsessive compulsives, borderline and

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character pathologies, and of narcissism. Don't you then need different kinds of treatment approaches to deal with these patients?

Robert Michels: Yes, although I would put it in a slightly different way. Essentially Freud started out treating the patients seen by an outpatient neurologist of the nineteenth century. Freud was not a psychiatrist. He was a neurologist. He treated the patients one sees in an ambulatory medical neurology practice, patients with physical neurological symptoms. He expanded his treatment to other patients with more psychological symptoms: panic attacks, phobias, obsessions, and the like. He then made a critical discovery: it was hard to treat patients because of their behavior in the treatment process. They were not helping the treatment, but in fact struggling against it and him. This phenomenon is called resistance. The focus of the treatment began to shift from understanding symptoms to understanding resistance. But what is the resistance? It is the way the patient behaves when faced with the challenge of being in analysis. However, that turns out to be the same way he behaves when facing any challenge. Resistance is character as it is expressed within the analytic situation. Psychoanalytic treatment shifted from treating neurotic symptoms to treating character. That shift didn't occur until twenty-five years into the history of analysis, and with it a concommitant shift that isn't much talked about. Analysis rarely lasted more than a year until 1920. The whole treatment was eight or nine months long, from the time Freud started until the third decade of analysis, when it shifted from trying to understand the symbolic meaning of symptoms to understanding the patterns of resistance that emerged. The shift from symptom analysis to character analysis is a shift from a one-year project to a multi-year project. To this day, analysis continues essentially to be primarily a treatment for character. It has expanded to treating more disturbed characters, narcissistic characters, borderline characters, but it is essentially still a treatment for character. It does treat symptoms, but there are often cheaper, faster, and even more effective ways of treating symptoms than analysis, so if the only goal were symptom relief, one would rarely prescribe analysis. Other treatments for symptoms, whether psychological or pharmacological, developed to replace analysis. There were attempts to apply analysis in the treatment of both psychosomatic disorders and psychoses, but it generally did rather poorly here. It continues to be the treatment of choice for character. In fact, we don't have many other treatments for character. If you suffer from a panic attack or a phobia or a depression, you can be treated without analysis. If persons who are suffering have problems not only with symptoms, but also with human relationships and the way they experience pleasure, the way they lead their lives, the way they approach relationships with others, their careers and themselves, then analysis is the treatment. Of course, Freud

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never invented analysis as a treatment for character. In fact, startlingly, he failed to observe the character pathology in his early patients. He describes it in detail and then says it isn't there, then rediscovers it as resistance. The patients Freud treated in the first twenty years of analysis, with the goals he had at that time, would not be seen as candidates for analysis today.

Marion Oliner: I wanted to add something to the question of whether psychoanalysis has moved. I think you are speaking about American psychoanalysis. I'm preparing a response to Janine Chassequet-Smirgel from France who called me and wanted to find out what was going on in American psychoanalysis. She believes that Americans have made radical compromises, especially in the last few years, and she is highly critical of that. I think you have described American psychoanalysis, not necessarily the way psychoanalysis relates to other cultures.

Robert Michels: I agree. I would say that in selecting Janine Chassequet-Smirgel you pointed out that I described much of the world of analysis, but not France. Certainly, I have been talking about America, and my guess is that British, most German and much of Scandinavian psychoanalysis would be much closer to America than to France in the terms we were talking about. French psychoanalysis evolved along somewhat divergent paths. And I am not the right person to be talking to you about French psychoanalysis.

Elaine Hoffman Baruch: It sounds to me from your description of the way American psychoanalysis is moving that it is becoming more of an art. It sounds very French. I don't think the French were ever particularly bothered by the idea that psychoanalysis is not a science, rather that they felt it was an art for living better. All this emphasis on hermeneutics and metaphor and construction of meaning sounds as if we are moving to Lacan. Are we getting into that camp now?

Robert Michels: Certainly it is closer to some of the French thinking than American psychoanalysis was thirty years ago. But I'd say that French psychoanalysis is totally unconcerned about being unscientific. American psychoanalysis is extremely anxious about the extent to which it has become a hermeneutic activity and is preoccupied with not discarding its scientific aspect and with searching for and exploring appropriate links and boundaries between what we know scientifically about human behavior and development, and the mind, and the clinical hermeneutic process. American psychoanalysts now are more comfortable seeing their activity in the consultation room as artistic. But they are insistent that this artistic activity must be disciplined and bounded by scientific knowledge and

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understanding. They tend to think of much of French psychoanalysis as lacking that discipline. I've put in those intermediate phrases because their data are largely secondary and I don't know how valid they are. I think that the image of French psychoanalytic practice amongst many American analysts who aren't directly knowledgeable is that it is the undisciplined use of meaning, construction, symbol, interpretation, and metaphor without any regard for the constraints of knowledge about human behavior from other sources.

Elaine Hoffman Baruch: One of the sources of the antagonism towards psychoanalysis and the terms some of us have used here is the expense of it. Most of us can't afford it and I think that is a reason for the hostility.

Robert Michels: This is an important point. In the last few years I have been involved in the world of medical economics. One of the interesting things is that the cost of psychoanalysis has increased less than the cost of almost any other health treatment over the last thirty years. The cost of an analytic session has gone up less than the cost of a day in the hospital, a surgical procedure, or almost any other health care procedure. The difference is that the costs of all those other things are largely concealed from the patient while the cost of analysis is directly experienced. If you have been in the hospital in the last year you don't know how much it cost per day. But you know the cost of your analytic sessions.

Some of the public's concern about the cost of personal healthcare has been displaced to analysis. Analysts, in fact, make less money per hour than almost any other physician or for that matter other equally-trained professionals in our society.

Peter Neubauer: I'd like to add something about the French. I think we should not ascribe one kind of approach to the entire French psychoanalytic community. Lebovici, for instance, would not be so close to philosophy and language theory as some of the others are. But I wonder if one of the misleading promises of analysis may also be connected with the expectation that analysis can read the unconscious. That is a whole new world, this is a new magic, a new possibility for understanding the mind. What do you have to tell us about those things that are hidden from us, since you say we gain an access to the conscious and pre-conscious, that leads to over-expectations, and to disappointment.

Robert Michels: This is, of course, Freud's understanding of some of the antagonism towards psychoanalysis, that it has exposed and dethroned man from one of the worlds of which he thought he was master. Not only has

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Copernicus demonstrated that he is not the center of the universe, and Darwin that he is not the ultimate result of evolution, but he doesn't even control what goes on in his mental life. I'm sure that that is a fundamental and vital basis for negative feelings. However, it isn't new, and therefore can't explain recent changes. No one who wants to be loved by mankind should go into the business of disclosing their hidden secrets.

Aileen Ward: You kept returning to the question of why Crews was so angry, which I find very interesting. Something else has happened to change Crews's attitude and perhaps many other people's attitudes, outside of the psychoanalytic community. Psychoanalysis is taking on a social dimension that it did not have thirty years ago. By this I mean not simply the patient-analyst relationship or the intellectual underpinnings of the method, but that quite apart from anything the analysts ever intended, it has become implicated in certain social phenomena. I don't know if any of you have heard about the Little Rascals scandal. It has been, I think, seven years in the running. An entire community has been affected by the misuse of psychoanalysis in the recovery of repressed memories. Individual families have been blasted. I think this is something we can't help but be troubled by, the extent to which the repressed memory theory has been used as a lever to produce these scandals.

Robert Michels: I am not familiar with that particular episode. I said earlier that to my knowledge the impact of psychoanalysis on the issue of memories of childhood abuse has largely been cautionary. It is psychoanalysis that acquainted us with the possibility of false memory, it is psychoanalysis that insisted on the centrality of the relationship in which the memory is recovered to our understanding of it rather than assuming that that relationship is neutral and the memory is simply a record of what happened. Psychoanalysis explained the principles by which memories are transformed and modified so that the adult memory is significantly changed from the childhood event. To me it is psychoanalysis that has given us the clinical strategies and intellectual equipment for emphasizing the reason to be cautious about regarding memories as data about the past. In fact, it has been severely attacked by those who are sympathetic to victims of child abuse and who fear that psychoanalysis undercuts their arguments by weakening the evidence that consists of memories. I don't understand Crews's or others' linking of false memory problems to psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis has been the intellectual argument against false memories.

Aileen Ward: I accept your distinction: this is a misuse of psychoanalysis, it doesn't take the prestige of psychoanalysis to make this kind of widespread abuse possible.

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Edith Kurzweil: I think that the history of psychoanalysis in this country can throw some light on this issue, since this was the only country where psychoanalysis was accepted by the culture at large, much more so than anywhere else. It was picked up already in the 1910s by mind healers, by religious groups, and developed in the general culture separately from what the psychoanalysts did with their patients.

Robert Michels: If you go back before two hundred years ago, there is very little sense of the psychological importance of the first five or six years of life. It was as though mental life began at age three and wasn't really very important until four or five. What went on before that had no real lasting psychic significance. It is hard to imagine such a view today, but it was the prevalent one. Certainly psychoanalysis was one of the central intellectual movements that awakened us to the great importance of the psychological life and experience of the first five years. That is a core belief of psychoanalysis. It is a tenet of everyone who calls him- or herself a psychoanalyst. Without that, one could argue, there would be very little interest in childhood trauma. Just as there is not a great deal of interest in intrauterine psychological experience, because no one believes it has that much effect. In that sense you could say, by opening up interest in the first five years of life, psychoanalysis softened the ground for later concerns about childhood trauma. I find that too broad an argument, it's almost like blaming Aristotle for every error in logic because he formulated the Posterior Analytics.

It is impossible to talk about human behavior, about motivation, about development in 1997 without using psychoanalytic concepts. We don't have any other language. However it doesn't follow that every statement made in that domain is the responsibility of psychoanalysis. I think the child abuse issue is an important one. It has to do not only with false accusations but probably with the small but significant prevalence of real abuse that was long ignored, denied, and disavowed. That is far more important numerically than false allegations and is a major social problem. Frankly, psychoanalysis hasn't done much on either side of that issue except to awaken us to the importance of childhood. Once it did that its interest has been predominantly about the universal fantasies of childhood, not the deviant, atypical realities.

Elizabeth Dalton: I wonder if you could say something about psychoanalytic training. One hears that it is sort of comparable to the Catholic priesthood, that the numbers have sharply dwindled. I've heard that an entire class at the Psychoanalytic Institute was just canceled because there were no candidates.

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Robert Michels: I don't know if that is true. A lot depends on your frame of reference. On Park Avenue and 79th Street it may look that way. If you look at the United States, there are more candidates in psychoanalytic training than there have ever been before in the history of the world. They are not only in the great coastal cities, which were the major centers for psychoanalysis forty years ago—New York, Boston, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles. In those older communities the growing number of analysts have had more competition, and some of their institutes have had diminishing supplies of candidates. At the same time there has been an expansion in the number of institutes, in cities all over the country—Dallas, New Orleans, Atlanta, Miami, St. Louis, Seattle—that didn't exist fifty years ago, institutes which have candidates and training analysts. Non-psychiatrist candidates now make up about thirty or forty percent of the candidates in the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association. There are other institutes connected with the International Psychoanalytic Association whose candidates are largely non-physicians, candidates who to a great extent were excluded from training a few decades ago.

From the point of view of an old established American training institute in one of the large cities on the coast, fewer candidates may be applying. But if you look at the totality of the training of analysts in the United States, more analysts are being trained. A lot of non-physicians are being trained and the geographic distribution is broader than it used to be.

Elaine Hoffman Baruch: I would like to know whether Frederick Crews and Jeffrey Masson have ever debated one another. Jeffrey Masson has exactly the opposite position in his assault on truth theory and faults Freud for turning away from his earlier theory of seduction, and many radical feminists have taken this further. All this is proof of Freud's theory that in the unconscious opposites are the same. These two are on opposite sides and they both seem to be believed by large contingents.

Robert Michels: I don't think we have a lot to learn about psychoanalysis from those debates. They each have passionate beliefs and use Freud as a symbol in an argument they are constructing. They may be saying something of importance about our society, but it doesn't have much to do with psychoanalysis. That doesn't mean it's not important, it's just that psychoanalysis isn't really a participant in that debate.

Alan Roland: Psychoanalysis has become more open, more diversified, and has more theoretical paradigms—at least in my experience of the last thirty-five years. You see changes in the field. For me psychoanalysis is much more interesting today, with controversy rather than following existing theories.

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And yet, you have also alluded that in American culture, as psychoanalysis has changed and become more open, the attitudes towards it have become more negative. Maybe this is a question that cannot be addressed on a scientific level, but more in terms of cultural studies of American society, of history and its interactions with psychoanalysis. At some point I would like to see some discussion, with others participating in it, to try to confront this great paradox.

Robert Michels: I totally agree with you that we are not going to discover the reasons for the negative feelings about psychoanalysis by studying psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis has become a symbol to the public with increasingly rich and varied meanings and some of those meanings are triggering negative responses. That is a fascinating element in the social history of ideas and symbols. But the public's negative feelings about psychoanalysis are not because it doesn't meet Popper's criteria for a falsifiable science. But if one wants to attack it, he could scan the *Index Medicus* and find many criticisms of psychoanalysis; there are many volumes by Grünbaum, and in any of them you have a thoughtful, coherent attack ready to be borrowed. But why the desire to attack in the first place? I don't think that the answer is going to be found in psychoanalysis.

William Phillips: I want to return to the question about the loss of prestige or the negative response to psychoanalysis. I think we shouldn't confuse the public response with an intellectual response. In fact I don't think we know what the public response is—it's mostly ignorance. I feel strongly, in the absence of data, that the public at large was never very much interested and probably didn't like psychoanalysis at all. What I think is important, however, is why there has been a shift in the intellectual's attitude to psychoanalysis. I recall about twenty or thirty years ago almost everyone I knew, and I am speaking of people who were writers, philosophers, literary critics, were fairly open to psychoanalysis. The one example that I can remember is Mary McCarthy, who went into psychoanalysis, and stopped after a very short time and came out saying that the whole process was pointless and worthless because she was smarter than the analyst.

What many people here have touched upon, the so-called negative intellectual response to psychoanalysis is that most people are not talking about psychoanalysis concretely. They are not really aware of what goes on in a psychoanalytic hour. It is a kind of general resistance to psychoanalysis, which didn't exist thirty years ago. I sometimes wonder if the old and seemingly clichéd explanation is that it is a form of resistance to psychoanalysis. Other than that I think the phenomenon is baffling.

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Robert Michels: Your examples are intellectuals who were interested in entering psychoanalysis as a therapeutic experience.

William Phillips: Partly that, but partly open to an intellectual experience.

Robert Michels: My impression is that in the world of the humanities—of literature, the arts, music, criticism, history—there is an immense interest in psychoanalysis. It is one of the most sought-out courses in our universities. When I taught at Cornell in Ithaca, I realized that if we could get more analysts there, we could fill the classes without any difficulty. At the same time I think it has lost a measure of status in psychology and certainly in medicine and psychiatry. One can see it in terms of the two worlds, the two perspectives we have been talking about. Its natural scientific status has largely diminished in the intellectual community, while that same community is immensely enthusiastic about it as a system of hermeneutics.

I have spoken about clinical psychoanalysis to groups of intellectuals who didn't know what I was talking about because it had nothing to do with "their" psychoanalysis. They would have easily understood a discussion about contemporary French psychoanalytic views, which I wasn't competent to offer. They were far more familiar with Lacan than with ego psychology and they had no interest at all in the clinical process of psychoanalysis. However, there was no lack of enthusiasm. I'm troubled by the divergence between the intellectual community that is familiar with the clinical process, which has always been the richest source of creative analytic ideas, and the intellectual community that knows little clinical analysis but is interested in applying psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to the study of texts, works of art, or historical phenomena. It seems to me that there is a potential for rich interaction between those two groups which doesn't always occur, and that that interaction might have been better thirty years ago than it is today.

William Phillips: I agree with you, but I am troubled by the fact that you seem to be saying that the phenomenon of Frederick Crews is not typical or widespread.

Robert Michels: I don't think it is typical or widespread in departments of English.

William Phillips: You seem to kowtow to French psychoanalysis and French deconstruction and other French theories. But that is something different. That seems to me to be a specific academic phenomenon.

Speaker: But you can make out an argument, I think, that American psychoanalysis does have a problem with the intellectual community by shutting it

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out from training as medical establishments are established only for psychiatrists; and now the psychologists are trying to restrict it to the mental health discipline and this is so all over the country—trying to exclude people in other disciplines from getting psychoanalytic training. In fact, restrictive laws have been enacted in fifteen different states.

Edith Kurzweil: I think you now are getting into issues of credentialing.

Speaker: Not just credentialing, but also the interface of intellectuals and analysts: that is what I am worried about.

Edith Kurzweil: There is one other point. I think that William defines intellectuals much more narrowly than academics do.

Peter Neubauer: But we would have to differentiate when we refer to psychoanalysis in its specific place. Do we speak of a theory of the mind, of a clinical method of intervention, or a mode of exploring psychic mechanisms? Unless we keep them separate we will get only general answers which will not cover it. If this is true on the clinical level, there is disenchantment among many people, not only about the duration, but also about the success of psychoanalysis. But if you point to the general psychology of the mind, whoever would be interested in it, there still is nothing that comes close to it.

Robert Michels: You think of it as a psychology of the mind, but I think the hermeneutic position would consider that as a special case of an interpretive system.

Peter Neubauer: In that debate they have added, or sometimes lost, an explanation of the experience of the meaning. Causation. That gets lost.

Robert Michels: Yes, but "lost" is a passive verb, I would say "ejected."

Edith Kurzweil: I want to thank you, because on that note we'll have to end. But now our hostess would like to say a few words.

Joanna Rose: Why don't we continue this discussion informally over dessert and coffee? Thank you all.

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DORIS LESSING

From *Walking in the Shade*

Somewhere towards the end of the sixties, I found that I was laughing, unexpectedly, helplessly: first, a disbelieving and incredulous yelp, and then a real laugh, ha ha, oh my God, but it's so funny . . .

What was? Sex, that's what. This laugh is out of its proper place only chronologically, because it was not merely the sixties I was looking at but the fifties too: as I have already hinted, sex did not begin in the sixties.

What distinguished the fifties, and then the sixties, was that there were no rules. Surely this must have been the first time in history—in any history that we remember—that there were no commonly accepted conventions and at the same time there was access to birth control. Anything went. And there were to be no rules until the advent of AIDS, which restored morality at a stroke.

I would say that in the fifties, in the way of love, or sex, the most obvious thing—obvious later—is that people were going to bed because it was expected of them. (The Zeitgeist demanded.) Some people were coupling like hypnotized fish bumping into each other. Curiosity? Perhaps, a little. Sexual fever, not at all. These embraces had nothing to do with love, and not much to do with sex either. I mean, real sexual attraction. There was a passivity about it all.

No one knew how to behave, neither men nor women. And this is why there was so much unhappiness, so much incomprehension. Do I exaggerate? Yes, I do, because I am leaving out of this account the enjoyable and happy encounters.

We are all now well equipped with handbooks explaining the basic differences between men and women, but the sixties coincided with a stage in the feminist movement which denied all differences between men and women. Or, as D. H. Lawrence put it, women were just as good as men, only better.

No ideological rages are likely to be aroused now at the news that men and women are biologically programmed to want different things—at the root of their natures, never mind how civilization or culture or current morality decides to tame us. There is no man who has not dreamed of that

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brief encounter where emotion does not enter for even one moment, that quick fuck without any strings or obligations, and not with a prostitute either. A fantasy of some golden age hovers here, I think. And there is no woman whose first emotion is not "Is this the man I'm looking for?" and this even when she has resolved to set this aside, having decided to be more like men, enjoying the fun of it all, for a night or two. I am prepared to bet that there is no woman who has not been left after the most enjoyable night imaginable, and even if neither knows the other's name, or wants to, without, as he leaves—full of love, admiration, and gratitude for her aplomb—a suddenly dull and empty feeling, for she has gone against her real deep nature and she must pay for it, even if only for half an hour.

How often have women who have with the most honest, open-hearted intentions spent a night with a man not found themselves swearing, raging: "You bloody heel. Surely you could at least ring up? Can't you even send some flowers?" For the flowers would be ample, would be enough, a psychological balance would be redressed. And meanwhile the man, full of affection and pleasure, is thinking, "Now, at last, a woman who understands how to enjoy life and who doesn't say, 'Do you really love me?'"

The Victorians knew what they were about, with their prescribed tributes of flowers from man to woman. I am tempted to say they knew what they were doing in laying down so many rules and restrictions. Romance is the child of prohibition. But let's leave romance out, for there are some parts of the world where it seems to have become obsolete. And already in the fifties there was the beginning of the feeling that sex was on an agenda, something that ought to be done, and blame would accrue if it was not performed.

I am walking down Church Street, Kensington, with Donald Ogden Stewart, and we are going to have dinner, his suggestion. He must be sixty or so a lean, balding, freckly, sandy man, and I am thirty-something. He says to me, "I ought to tell you that these days I am more interested in food than in sex." I was absolutely, coldly furious. That it was so graceless—well, what did one expect? meaning, specifically, from Americans; but there had never been, not for one second, any suggestion of a physical attraction, and anyway he was old. Now I see this as a quite sensible (if graceless) way of dealing with the situation. After all, he had come from Hollywood, and from the Left in America, and probably had had affairs by the dozen. To his contemporaries he must have seemed an attractive man. None of us find it easy to know that we are not as attractive as we once were. He had thought, I'm not going to sit through the whole dinner while she is wondering if I'm going to make a pass.

Again I have been out to dinner, with a high executive in Granada Television, for I am going to write for them. He drinks heavily all evening.

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But everyone drank a lot then; these days if you invite people to dinner or a party, the amount of alcohol drunk is a tenth of what it was then. He drives me home and says, "I'm sorry, I can't make it, I'm too drunk." Yet there had not been a flicker of sexual interest between us. I am furious. The oaf. The idiot. The conceited fool. The story "One Off the Short List" is apropos.

I look back and see myself, a forthright, frank young woman, often tactless out of a genuine outrage at what I still saw as dishonesty. I despised all female ruses, as insults to real friendship, to humanity, and to humanism itself. I would have scorned to play hard to get, to coquette, play hot and cold. I would say this is generally true of the Western female, but I was also a colonial and even more liberated from the hypocritical shackles of the past—as I saw it. A comradely equality, that was my style, easy friendliness, even intimacy.

To see the difference between liberated Western girls and, let's say, Indians, one only has to spend an hour in a mixed group and watch the languishing eyes, deep glances, sighs, little fluttering withdrawals, coquettish veils and scarves always at their work. It is not that such operators do not exist in the West, and when she appears then the liberated ones have to stand back helpless and watch men fall before her, for the traditional dishonesties are based on the soundest knowledge of male and female nature. A woman playing hot and cold is at the oldest and most successful game in the world—the rules are admirably set forth in Stendhal's *Love*. But how can one enjoy that ideal, perfect, *honest*, loving friendship with a man on whom you are playing such tricks? And yet for some women these aren't tricks, they're doing what comes naturally. . .and so we go around and around.

With Western women, particularly the English, men don't know where they are: except those men with an instinctive understanding of women, with whom one immediately sets up a current of happy complicity.

To put an end to this flounder in marshy waters: the comradely and helpful equality meant that (means that) a man may think a woman is in love with him—simply because he has been admitted into an easy intimacy—and may rejoice or run a mile. But equally, since she is still a woman and full of a certain residual shyness underneath all that friendliness, she may be madly in love with him and he never suspects it.

I look back on tangles of misunderstanding. Men who I liked, with whom I intended friendship, imagined I was in love and were confused when refused, became huffy, were hurt: *Why did she lead me on?* Men whom I hoped would see I fancied them did not know it, since the signs were so well camouflaged by general mateyness. The free-and-easy, anything goes of the fifties, and then the sixties, obscured genuine emotions, attractions, repulsions. If there is a convention that easy sex is a sign of general libera-

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tion, civilization, and equality, then what happens to all the subtle to-and-fro, the natural affinities and antipathies—real sex, in short?

To add to the confusion, I enjoyed flirting, but then I don't see that as any more than a pleasant game, an agreeable convention. Well, it is in some parts of the world. Recently I met a couple of young Mexican women who had gone to Canada and the United States for a holiday. Used to the flattering attention of men and to the pleasures of flirting, they soon wondered what was wrong with them: had they lost all their looks and their charm? Inquiring of a sympathetic male friend, they were told, "You don't understand: men can't show they find women attractive any longer; they may find themselves in prison."

My most bizarre sexual encounter was with Ken Tynan. I had gone with him to the theatre and then to some party of actors winding down after a performance. Ken was the star, shedding witticisms and benevolent advice and criticism. Then it was very late, and he suggested I stay the night in Mount Street. The young of every generation have to imagine they have invented casual ways, but the innocent sharing of beds did not begin in the sixties. Not once, nor twice, have I spent a friendly night with some man because we haven't finished our conversation or because he missed the last train. Never, not for the slice of a second, had there been sexual attraction between Ken and me. I cannot imagine two human beings less likely to make each other's pulses flutter. I had often been in the Tynan bedroom, because it was where we left coats during parties. I came back from the bathroom to get into bed beside companionable Ken, and suddenly the bedroom walls had been grotesquely transformed, for on them were arranged every sort of whip, as if in a whip museum. Now, you'd think, wouldn't you, that Ken would say, "Are you wondering what all those whips are doing there?" Or I would say, "Now, about those whips, Ken?" Not at all; there we lay, side by side, conversing agreeably about a hundred things, but certainly politics, because that was our favorite subject. I used to tell him he was romantic, not to say sentimental, and ignorant, and he complained I was cynical and lacking faith in humanity. I remember an occasion when he summoned me to a meeting to discuss how to protest about something, I forget what, with several prominent people. I said I found this business of celebrities "sitting down" in public to fast as a protest absurd and laughable, because everyone knew that the moment the "fast" was over we would all be off to a five-star restaurant. Ken thought I was lacking in any instinct for publicity, and he was afraid I often showed reactionary tendencies.

And so we fell asleep and were woken by a female menial bringing breakfast on two trays. (Ken refused to cook, and so did Elaine Dundy. Neither knew how to boil an egg, they proudly claimed, and they always

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ate in restaurants. Even breakfast was brought in.) Then she tidied away the whips.

The same sort of thing happened to me with other well-known men—whose names I am withholding—but Ken not only made no secret of his tastes but flaunted them. He took to extremes the didact's need to believe that everyone must be the same as himself, describing his somewhat perverse musical *Oh, Calcutta* as "after-dinner entertainment for civilized people."

A scene: A party in Mount Street. Ken is confronting a young actress, newly arrived in London. He is trying to persuade her that her refusal to accept whips and associated delights was because she had been taught prejudice.

"You have been conditioned," says Ken, his stammer reinforcing his pedagogical self. He towers over her while she smiles delightfully up at him.

"But, Ken," she murmurs, "I don't enjoy it."

He is checked, but the force of his need to instruct carries him on. "You have been taught to think that there is only one way of having sex."

"I wouldn't exactly say only one. . . ." She smiles, earning applause from the listening party-goers.

"Only one kind," says Ken, and is probably on the point of launching into informational anecdotes from Greece and Rome and the Lord knows where else, but she again says firmly, "Ken, I don't enjoy it."

And now one may observe the switch in him from the teacher to the wit. "I must protest that you have unfairly silenced me," says Ken. "I have no more to say. How, logically, could I have? How could you not have my blessing? Enjoy, then, my darling."

It is a disconcerting thing for a more or less normal woman, after having enjoyed dinner and chat about literature, the theatre, politics, to find one's host suggesting a little diversion with whips, as if saying, "A drop of port, perhaps? Or I have some nice dessert wine." Or even producing the whips—once it was a sjambok, always irresistible to sadomasochists—and reacting to a refusal as if it were you, not he, who is a little strange.

The following tale is here because of the talk about black men's superiority in bed. White women lusting after black penises is one of the myths furnishing the colonial mind, and I was listening to variations on the myth as I grew up. And then this particular incident happened at a time when the prowess of black studs was much vaunted, because for some reason the superiority of black people's sexuality (men and women both) had become part of "progressive" thinking.

A certain exiled black writer was putting in his time in London. He pursued me for months, full of ardor; he loved me, he could not sleep for thinking of me. Sighs and suffering, the language of romantic despair—the

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lot. Now, I had never been to bed with a black man. This was because I did not really fancy them. You could say it was my early conditioning, if it were not that the same conditioning has produced people, but I think mostly men, who yearn for black flesh. It was because of pity for his state that I eventually gave in, expecting to assuage a painful passion. The actual sexual contact lasted perhaps three minutes, and then he fell asleep. His snores were such as I had never heard before nor have since. I removed myself to another bed and slept peacefully till morning. When I took him in a cup of tea he was uxorious and complacent. Then he saw I had not slept beside him and demanded to know why. The inhibitions of a proper upbringing—"You must *never* hurt people's feelings"—intervened, and I murmured, "You were snoring." He seemed surprised. Having drunk his tea, he dressed and said that he was so happy. He then resumed his romantic pursuit—telephone calls, passionate letters, encounters in the street, where he had been lying in wait. I cannot help feeling that all this romantic passion of his had derived from literature. I have sometimes caught a certain ironical look on the faces of black women friends when told of the amorous fame of their partners. But perhaps I was unlucky.

Another occasion I remember with shame. This was a black man too, and he was from Jamaica. Madly in love, he was, and his pursuit was lengthy and exhaustive. Remembering my previous experience, I kept saying no, and then at last I thought, as women may do, Oh, for God's sake, what am I making such a fuss about, if it means so much to him? I took off all my clothes—and then I put them on again, for by now I was thinking, Why the hell should I, when I don't want to? This was a terrible thing to do. Cruel. As my mother might have said, though in a somewhat different context, There are things a decent woman doesn't do.

There was a theatre director who was as queer as they come, and famously so, with whom I shared the easy friendship women do with some homosexuals. A rambunctious sexual romp of a play was running, *Lock Up Your Daughters*, and in it was the line, "When is the ravishing going to start?" I am descending a staircase, glass in one hand and a cigarette in the other, and this suitor stops me by gripping both my arms while he stands in front of me, demanding, "And *when* is the ravishing going to start?" A joke, you'd think, but no, for a time whenever we met he'd accost me, by now full of accusation, saying, "It is your duty to initiate me into the joys of this heterosexual sex we hear so much about."

And now an embattled subject, American men. Things may very well have changed, for they always do, but in those days a lot of comparisons were being made, invidious or not. A woman cannot have as bed partners first a man from the center of Europe and then one from America, both womanizers on principle, without brooding about differences. I say

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"womanizers" and not "lovers of women" here, because no one could accuse—then—Americans of that willing if sometimes whimsical subjection to the magics and manias of love that we call romance. All the Americans I knew had a certain attitude to sex—let's not call it love—and they all played a role. Mensch. Tough guy. Where did it come from? I think, like jazz and a lot else in American culture, from black culture. A real man loves them and leaves them—no, fucks them and leaves them. There was something willed about it and something joyless. A practical lot, they are, down to earth. Or were. Now, the essence—surely—of this masculine woman-haver-and-subduer is something active, dominant, is one who sets the pace and draws the boundaries. But as we all know, extremes meet, and extremes turn into their opposites.

Imagine a room and in it several women, all European, and it is the mid-sixties. We are talking about American men. We have all had American lovers—no, bedfellows—and two of us have actually had, or been had by, the same man. It is not common, this kind of conversation between women—or it wasn't then—and it all happened by chance. There we were, ten or so of us . . . the talk led from one thing to another. The conclusions I am offering are too comprehensive to be the result of only one woman's researches.

Would we all agree that American men loved with their heads and not their hearts? Absolutely; their hearts were not involved. Would we agree that in those heads was a blueprint for behavior with women, in bed and out of it, and they performed—or fucked—not from some deep instinct or (perish the thought) the need to express love, but from a need to affirm to themselves that they were indeed mensches? Here D. H. Lawrence was quoted: "warm-hearted fucking," for instance. It is interesting how often this writer is quoted in conversations of this sort. For if he knew very little about sex, he did know a lot about love. But in parenthesis, perhaps we should remember that the expertise in sex we all pride ourselves on is after all recent: nothing unusual then about Lawrence's ignorance; it was general.

It was as if—we agreed—in the solar plexus of this performer was a cold place, an icy promontory, an extension from some continent all tundra. There was the intelligent head, there were the hot prick and balls, but in between, a cold defensive place.

The talk strayed off to the legacy of the troubadours and *trouvères* in France, in lovely France, for could we perhaps make a case that loving of a certain poetic and even fanciful kind had never reached Germany, whose culture had so extensively influenced America, and particularly its universities . . .? Well, that was the kind of talk, and its culminating moment was when one television woman offered a little tale of a certain American filmmaker, an exemplar of cock-and-balls, poised over her like an arched

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bow, but motionless, scolding her, "Use it, use it, damn you." Was not that the extreme of passivity, male as fucking machine, for the pleasure of the female, to be used by her (but was the word "pleasure," with its frivolous associations, permissible here?) Here was the absolute embodiment of a mensch but, at the moment of truth, passivity and instructions how to make use of him. Was this not a case of an extreme turning into an opposite? Well, yes, that was about it—at least for that time, for if you read novels and other witnesses of American culture, it was not always thus. No, a certain time produced the fucking machine, which, as everything has to do, disappeared. Or has it? Has feminism restored the warm heart, the male solar plexus radiating hot need like a little sun?

Probably the most interesting thing about this long-ago scene is its tone, so far from vindictiveness of the Cruel Sisters. For years—decades—perhaps centuries—women have been complaining about men's lack of sensitivity, their unkindness, but no sooner have women acquired power than they permit, even sanctify, some of the nastiest manifestations of human nature.

A television program: In front of several million viewers, a liberated woman says, "My husband is a bit of a wimp really."

Turn it around: "My wife is a very frightened soul, I am afraid, no courage." Oh, the *callous* swine.

A dinner party: The wife, casually: "My two husbands—" The husband: "But surely you've had three, darling?" "Oh, I wasn't counting you; I haven't had a child by you."

"My wife's a disappointment to me. She's barren." The *pig.*

Another party: "My husband often can't get it up. He's semi-impotent." This, loudly laughing.

Monsieur Sorel in *The Red and the Black*, the archetype of the thick insensitive boorish husband, with a sneer: "Woman's delicate machinery. . ."

Only last week I got a letter from an American woman: "Do you ever think about the female monsters you unleashed with *The Golden Notebook*? They hate men and hate women who love men."

A scene: A famous American feminist is visiting London, and I go to see her with a man who has consistently taken a feminist position, and long before it was fashionable. As we walk through the hotel she deliberately slams one door after another in his face.

A scene: A building in London that houses a feminist publishing house has in it other offices, one of which is regularly visited by a friend of mine from the Middle East, as it happens an exemplary husband and father. It took him a long time, he said, to understand why it was that every time he passed the door of the publishing house, one of the females came out and deliberately stamped on his feet, as hard as she could. He was a Muslim and by definition enslaved women.

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Not least depressing is that this kind of thing was thought of by the Cruel Sisters as *political* action.

The other day a group of women on one television channel were complaining about men's rudeness to them, and on another a woman was saying that all men are slimebags.

Could we have foreseen this efflorescence of crude stupidity? Yes, because every mass political movement unleashes the worst in human behavior and admires it. For a time at least.

It certainly hasn't been easy to be a feminist these last thirty years.

Now Englishmen, if possible an even more embattled subject than American men: Englishwomen perennially sit around complaining about Englishmen. They don't really like women, they don't really like sex. Englishwomen go searching for true love among their compatriots but then often find it with men not English. It is not unknown for Englishwomen to take themselves abroad to find lovers, "just to remind myself that I am still a woman." Which hints at the real trouble, which is really a lack not of the thump thump of sex but the approaches to it. But surely these unromantic Englishmen are only the counterpart of the sisterly, comradely, straightforward women who, if they knew how to use female wiles, would despise them?

They are homosexuals, comes the plaint; it is because of those all-male schools they go to. But I think Englishmen are the most romantic men in the world, and this is precisely because of their incarceration in boys' schools, aged seven, to sob their hearts out for mummy night after night, with their heads beneath the bedclothes. There is nothing like early childhood deprivation for creating people (men and women) who fall drastically and repeatedly for out-of-reach loves. Some spend their lives with their romantic imaginations inhabited by unobtainable loves. Yet when they are at last matched, they are the best lovers, the most intelligent, and—most important—the funniest. What is wrong with Englishmen is not that they hate women, or even do not like them, but that their impressionable years were spent entirely with males. Life in a male public school is harsh. "If you have been in English public school, then prison life, or being a hostage, is a mere bagatelle"—we have heard this again recently. And if public schools are less brutal and bullying than they were, these places are still, above all, hierarchies and structured like armies. After years of growing up in a narrow slot of humanity, at first desperately homesick and then learning emotional coldness; of finding some kind of warmth in sex with other boys or in intense emotional friendships. . .they escape to romantic love with women, powered by memories of the destitutions of their childhood and adolescence. And they grow older, marry or not, and there is always something missing, and it is the companionship of men. Women married to

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Englishmen don't have to fear losing them to another woman nearly so much as to the club or the companionableness of the office or any place where men are in groups. This is because no romantic or sentimental or domestic love can ever come up to the intensity of those years at school, like the companionship of soldiers. By now we all know that painful and unpleasant experience impresses itself, that we are taught masochism in a thousand ways. It is a horrid fact that soldiers may adore cruel commanding officers: "I'd follow the brute to hell and back." What they are adoring is the intensity of the experience. "The best years of my life," old soldiers will say, looking back at the horrors of war, but they were fiercely alive and, above all, in the close and undangerous companionship of men.

But you are talking about public school boys, surely a minority, readers may complain. True. But it is not only the upper classes; far from it. The most revealing clue to the dark depths of the English male psyche, a little fragment of evidence, is that perennial British comedy situation: an impervious, or unnoticing, or—and here is the essence of it—*serious* male is being pursued by a woman or a girl, and she is in love with him or fancies him. This can be good-humored, or it can be cruel, but she is a figure of fun, she is ridiculous. It is a ritual humiliation, and it recurs again and again, and again and again; you can scarcely have a British comedy without it. Or there is this upright Englishman, and he finds himself in a harem or a group of sexy women, but he is sturdily indifferent to their absurd wiles. And surely it is not an accident that "Not tonight, Josephine," is a favorite and perennial joke. Only in Britain—or perhaps I should say England . . . And yet, now, I must say that there were two men I could have married or lived with happily ever after, and they were English.

There is a complaint by women, I think a new one, a concomitant of the sexual equality, and it goes like this: Here I am, an attractive woman, I cook like an angel, I am good in bed, I am self-sufficient—surely I am a pretty good bet for any man. But while they fall for me in droves, they go off and shack up with some green girl.

When that hopeless and helpless laughter overtook me, the best of it was because of this; and it was a long-overdue seeing of an absurdity. As one of our most famous poets puts it, with a wondering awe at the plentitudes of Nature, "Every year they come tumbling out of their schools, these lovely girls, as certain as flowers in spring, and I always wonder, what have we done to deserve them?"

A sad little tale apropos: A certain friend, in her late forties, attractive, clever, competent, well-read, knowledgeable about politics, and financially independent, thought it unfair that a woman like herself was not valued above some nymphet. After too many unhappy experiences, she announced to her friends that she had seen the light. What she wanted was

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a middle-aged man, intelligent, well-read, interested in politics, not to live with or marry, but to share walks, meals, theatre, and bed "when it comes over us. And I don't want ever again to wake with a man in my bed and then have to make breakfast for him. And I promise you this: I've been a port in the storm to my very last hopeful novelist or musician or poet."

At the same time, a handsome, well-read, covetable man of middle age was saying he was sick to death with these girls he kept marrying and then having to divorce, and he wanted a mature, self-sufficient, well-read woman, who didn't want him to move in. What he valued now was his independence.

And now a group of us went to work, and with what tact, care, and deviousness. Neither of the protagonists was allowed even a hint of what was going on. We planned a party, a casual affair, of enough people for nothing to be obvious. This is what happened: Betty—we will call her—came in at the same time as—we will call him—Jeffrey. They at once noticed each other and began to exchange sharp witticisms. We, the observers, were pleased, since antagonism so often leads to happy endings. But alas . . . rather later there arrived an uninvited daughter of one of the conspirators, an apologetic girl of twenty or so, who was drawn to her fate like a little boat going over a waterfall, and she and Jeffrey left together to embark on yet another misfortune, while Betty went off with a neophyte actor from the Midlands, just arrived in London. He was hungry, he said loudly: "For God's sake, won't some good woman take me home and feed me?"

There were two men then in London who had both removed themselves long before from the dangers of being chosen as a husband or a "partner," who were unlike each other in every way, and yet on each passport, under "Occupation" could have been written *Sex*.

One was South African, and behind him was a classically bad childhood, brutal father, beatings, coldness, and an early escape into the underworld of a big city. He had created for himself a house like a temple, not to love—certainly not—but to sex. How had this poor boy done it?—for it was a fine house. Much better not to ask. It was a violent and sentimental house: here again the link between sentimentality—the tears in the eyes, as if an invisible observer were counting the tears, each one evidence of superior sensibility—and pain, but not necessarily physical, for this was as much psychological domination. The girls—of all ages—were adored, were worshipped, and subjugated. This kind of sex is not every woman's cup of tea.

The other man was from South America, part Japanese, part Spanish. He had a vast flat, and every item in it could have starred in a museum. He was very rich. He had been studying—and still was—sexual practices

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of the subtle and esoteric sort from many cultures. Unlike the man on the other side of London, he did not collect women, for he aimed to find at last that woman who would be his sole companion in the ways of love, because, he claimed, for real achievement in love, two bodies and hearts and—he would insist—souls, as well, should be perfectly in tune with each other, and this could take months, even years. He despised, could not take seriously, people with several or many sex partners, or even more than one. Mere amateurs: they understood nothing. His wife had been his colleague, his ideal, but she had insisted on having children, and so with regret they parted. She lived in a flat nearby, and he was a good father to the children, but as he said, children do not go well with the erotic life. With her he had sex of a utilitarian sort. I am of course tempted here to invent a chronicle of amorous adventure, a diary of arcane delights, but I had to earn my living, and there was a child to consider. My interesting friend understood the problem well: the pursuit of real love needed a reliable private income and childlessness, he said often. We met occasionally, before he left London for Spain, for a meal and a chat, and I heard all about his present researches, and occasionally did sigh a little, for surely there are few more delightful ways of passing the time—but even to use that phrase explains why I could never have been a suitable candidate. Besides, I must confess, perhaps slightly ashamed, like someone who has failed a high examination, that *long-term I would get bored.* Truly he was right when he said that one had to put one's whole heart into the thing, like searching for a Holy Grail or for a key to a mysterious hidden realm—the growing point, in fact—or otherwise expect the ravages of futility, a soured desert.

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AMOS OZ

Panther in the Basement

At night, after lights-out, I used to lie in the dark listening. Outside, on the other side of the wall, was an empty, sinister world. Even our familiar garden, with the pomegranate tree and the village I had built out of match-boxes underneath it, was not ours at night: it belonged to the curfew and to evil. From garden to garden groups of fighters advanced in the darkness on desperate missions. British patrols armed with searchlights and tracker dogs roamed the empty streets. Spies, detectives, and traitors were pitted in a war of brains. Casting their nets. Planning cunning ambushes. The empty streets were lit by a ghostly light from streetlamps wreathed in summer mist. Beyond our street, beyond the confines of our neighborhood, lay more deserted streets, lanes, alleys, steps, arches, all pervaded by the darkness that was full of eyes, pierced by the barking of dogs. Even the row of buildings on the other side of our street seemed on those nights of curfew to be cut off from us by a river of deep darkness. As though the Dorzions, Mrs. Ostrowska, Dr. Gryphius, Ben Hur and his sister Yardena were all on the other side of mountains of darkness. Beyond the same dark mountain were the Shibboleth newsstand and the Sinopsky Brothers grocery, protected by iron shutters and two padlocks. I felt that the phrase "beyond the same dark mountain" could be felt with your fingertips like thick black baize. Above our heads Mr. Lazarus's roof was swathed in darkness and the hens were pressed close together. On those nights all the hills that surrounded Jerusalem were mountains of darkness. And what was there beyond the hills? Stone-built villages, clustering around minarets. Empty valleys where foxes and jackals roamed and even the occasional hyena. Bloodthirsty gangs. And angry ghosts from bygone days.

I lay huddled, wide awake, until the silence became more heavily charged than it could bear, and then it began to be pierced by shots. Sometimes it was a distant stray burst of fire from the direction of Wadi Joz or Isawiya. At others a sharp, knifelike salvo maybe from Sheikh Jarrah or staccato machine-gun fire from Sanhedriya. Was it us? The real

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Underground? Brave boys signalling to each other from rooftop to rooftop with faint pocket flashlights? Sometimes after midnight a succession of heavy explosions came from south of the city, from the direction of the German Colony or, further still, from the Valley of Hinnom or Abu Tor or the Allenby Camp or the hills of Mar Ilias along the way to Bethlehem. A dim rumble rolled through the thickness of the ground under the asphalt of the roads and the foundations of the buildings making the windowpanes chatter and rising up from the floor into my bed, producing a cold shudder.

The only telephone in the vicinity was at the pharmacy. Sometimes late at night I seemed to hear repeated ringing from three streets away, pleading out there where there was not a living soul. And the closest radio was in Dr. Buster's flat, six buildings eastward. We would know nothing until dawn broke. Not even if the British tiptoed out of Jerusalem and left us alone, surrounded by masses of Arabs. Not even if hordes of armed marauders forced their way into the city. Not even if the Underground stormed Government House. Through the other wall, from my parents' room, I could hear only silence. My mother might have been reading, in her dressing gown, or writing out a shopping list for the institution where she worked. My father would sit up till one, sometimes two o'clock, his back hunched, his head outlined by a halo of light from his desk lamp, intent on filling cards with information he needed for his book on the history of the Jews in Poland. Sometimes he would make a note in pencil in the margin of a book: The evidence is inconclusive, or, This could be interpreted differently, or even, Here the author is definitely mistaken. Sometimes he would incline his self-righteous, weary head and whisper to some tome on one of the shelves: "This summer too will pass. Winter will come. And it is not going to be easy." My mother would reply: "Please don't say that." Father: "Why don't I get you a glass of tea. Then you must get some sleep. You're so tired." There was a hesitancy in his voice, a midnight gentleness. In the hours of daylight he mostly spoke like a judge passing sentence.

One day a minor miracle occurred: one of Mr. Lazarus's hens laid some eggs and sat on them till five chirping chicks hatched out. Even though we had never seen a cock. My mother made some joking remark, but Father rebuked her:

"Stop it. The boy can hear."

Mr. Lazarus refused to sell the chicks. He gave each one a name. He spent the whole day pottering around on the sunbaked roof, with an expression of faint surprise, wearing a waistcoat, with a tape measure around his neck. He had hardly any work. Most of the time he argued in German with his hens, shouted at the chicks and forgave them, scattered seed, crooned lullabies, changed the sawdust, or stooped down and picked up a

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favorite chick, which he cradled against his breast and rocked like a baby.

Father said:

"If we have a little bread left over, or a cupful of soup—"

And my mother:

"I've sent him some already The boy took it up, and some groats from yesterday too; we must go on saying it's for the chicks so as not to offend him. But what will happen in the long run?"

Father replied:

"We must do whatever we can, and hope."

My mother said:

"There you go, talking like the radio again. Stop it. The boy can hear."

Every evening the three of us sat in the kitchen, after supper and the start of the curfew, playing Monopoly. My mother would clasp a glass of tea in her hands, absorbing its warmth even though it was summer. And we would sort stamps and stick them in the album. Father liked to recount various facts about each country we came across. My mother soaked the stamps off the paper. After twenty minutes I fished the loosened stamps out of the basin of water and laid them out to dry on a sheet of blotting paper. The stamps lay there face downward like the photograph of Italian prisoners of war captured by Field Marshal Montgomery in the Western Desert: they sat in rows on the burning sand, with their hands tied behind their backs and their faces hidden between their knees.

Then Father would identify the dried stamps with the help of the thick English catalogue that had on its cover an enlarged drawing of the stamp with a black swan, the most valuable stamp in the world, even though its face value was only one penny. I would pass Father the transparent hinges on my outstretched hand, my eyes fixed on his lips. Father talked about some countries with polite loathing; others commanded his respect. He would talk about the population, the economy, the principal towns, the natural resources, the archeological sites, the political regime, the artistic treasures. He always spoke especially about the great painters, musicians, and poets, who, by his account, were almost all Jews, or of Jewish descent, or at least half-Jews. Sometimes he would touch me on the head, or on the back, groping inside himself for some stifled affection, and suddenly he would say:

"Tomorrow you and I shall go to the newsdealer. I'll buy you a pencil case. Or something else, if you like. You're not happy enough."

Once he said:

"I'm going to tell you something, a secret I've never told anybody. Please keep it just between the two of us. I'm a bit color-blind. These things happen. It's a hereditary defect. It looks as though you'll have to see some things for the two of us. Yes indeed; after all, you are imaginative and intel-

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ligent." And there were words that Father used without realizing that they made Mother sad. Carpathians, for example. Or belfry. Also opera, carriage, ballet, cornice, clock square. (What is a cornice, in fact? Or a gable? A weather vane? A porch? What does a groom look like? Or a chancellor? A gendarme? A bell ringer?)

According to our fixed agreement my father or mother would come to my room at precisely ten-fifteen to make sure I had really turned my bedside light off. My mother would sometimes stay for five or ten minutes; she would sit on the edge of my bed and reminisce. Once she told me how, when she was a little girl of eight, she had sat one summer morning on the bank of a stream in the Ukraine, next to a flour mill. The water was dotted with ducks. She described the bend in the river where it disappeared into the forest. That was where things that the water carried away always disappeared: bark from trees or fallen leaves. In the yard of the mill she found a broken shutter painted pale blue and threw it into the stream. She imagined that this stream, which came out of the forest and vanished into it again, had more bends inside the forest that completed a circle. So she sat there for two or maybe three hours, waiting for her shutter to complete the circuit and reappear. But only ducks came back.

At school she had been taught that water always flows downhill because such are the laws of nature and not otherwise. But surely in bygone times people believed in different natural laws; for instance, they believed that the earth was flat and that the sun went around the earth and that the stars were put in the sky to watch over us. Maybe the natural laws of our own time were also temporary laws, and would soon be replaced by new ones?

The next day she went back to the stream, but the blue shutter had not returned. On the days that followed she would sit and wait for half an hour or an hour on the bank of the stream, although she had worked out that the failure of the shutter to return proved nothing: the stream might well be circular, but the shutter might be stuck in the bank somewhere. Or in shallow water. Or it might already have floated past the mill, once or twice or even more often, but it could have happened at night, or at mealtimes, or perhaps it was while she was sitting waiting but at the precise moment it went past she had been looking up at a flight of birds and had missed it. Because large flocks of birds used to fly past in the autumn, the spring, even in summer, with no relation to the times of migration. In fact, how could you tell how big the circle was that the stream described before coming back to the mill? A week? A year? Maybe more? Perhaps at that very moment, when she was sitting on my bed telling me about the shutter, during the curfew in Jerusalem in nineteen forty-seven, the blue shutter from her childhood was still floating on the stream there, in the Ukraine, or in the valleys of the Carpathian Mountains, passing laundries, fountains, cornices, and belfries.

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Still floating away from that flour mill, and who could say when it would reach its furthest point and start its return journey? It might take another ten years. Or seventy. Or a hundred and seven. Where was that blue shutter when my mother told me about it, more than twenty years after she threw it in? Where exactly were its remains, its crumbled fragments, its rotting debris? Surely there must have been something left then. And there must be something left even now, the evening I am writing this, some seventy years since the summer morning when my mother tossed it into the stream.

The day the shutter finally returns to the point where my mother threw it in the water, beside the flour mill, it will not be seen by our eyes, for they will no longer exist, but by other eyes. The eyes of a man or woman who will be unable even to imagine that the object floating on the stream came from here and has now returned. What a pity, Mother said: if anyone sees my sign floating past the mill again, if they even notice it, how will they know that it is a sign, a proof that everything goes around in circles? In fact, it is possible that the person who happens to be there on the very day and at the very moment when the shutter returns may also decide to make it a sign, to test whether or not the stream is circular. But by the time it comes full circle again that new person too will no longer exist. Another stranger will stand there and again won't have any idea. Hence the urge to tell.

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MORRIS DICKSTEIN

Edmund Wilson: Three Phases

As we grow remote from the cultural situation in which they worked, critics are more likely to be forgotten than reconsidered. Unlike literature, criticism actually develops from one generation to another as critics build on their predecessors by exploding or assimilating them. Unless it survives on style alone, criticism, as a timely mediation between writers and readers, quickly grows dated. Edmund Wilson's work, however, is a notable exception. It's striking that we can go back to his first reactions to Hemingway or Fitzgerald in the twenties and still respond strongly to them.

In the past few years we've learned a great deal, perhaps too much, about Wilson the man. There have been seven volumes of diaries, a large and very readable selection of letters, a separate edition of his correspondence with Vladimir Nabokov, a number of biographies and memoirs by and about Mary McCarthy in which Wilson figures chiefly as the villain, and a widely reviewed biography by Jeffrey Meyers. While Meyers is respectful of Wilson the writer, and tries hard to imagine the marriage to McCarthy from Wilson's point of view, his book focuses too much on Wilson the almost clinical lover, the difficult husband, the distracted, intermittent father, the imperious personality. What we need is a scrupulous and detailed intellectual biography, which Meyers's work does not pretend to be. It's not entirely without interest, if true, that Wilson and his friend John Peale Bishop once shared the body of Edna St. Vincent Millay—I forget which one took the upper half and which the lower—but it's hard to see how it adds anything to our understanding of Wilson the writer. There must be a better way to go back to his work, to ask some essential questions about how he still engages us as contemporary readers, and to explore his connections to the cultural and political life of his times.

A useful way to examine Wilson's career is to think of it as an itinerary in three phases, as he himself once tried to do in some notes for an autobiographical novel. He was a commanding figure from the early twenties, when he began writing for *Vanity Fair*, to the early seventies when he

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died, and only H.L. Mencken has been as posthumously prolific. Looking back on his huge body of writing, I'm struck by its extraordinary variety, from the drama and fiction and poetry at which he was not very successful to the travel writing that supports much of his later work. His early criticism itself is just as varied. Besides introducing an often puzzled audience to the new American writers of his generation and to the difficult modernists—he wrote some of the first articles about them to appear in the American press—he also wrote about Chaplin movies, popular culture, vaudeville, and the Ziegfeld Follies. In its freshness and abundance, *The Shores of Light* is surely the best collection of his journalism: ninety-seven articles, full of the excitement of discovery, yet only a selection of what he published during the twenties and thirties. It would be hard to imagine a more spirited literary chronicle of the era.

Nothing illuminates the conditions under which Wilson worked better than these weekly pieces, written under deadline yet always alert to new subjects. Today we no longer have a steady critic writing regular critical essays for a magazine like *The New Republic*, Wilson's main forum during the period. His old nemesis, Stanley Edgar Hyman, who had once dismissed him as a mere journalist, was perhaps the last to try it, taking on every important new novel for *The New Leader* in the 1960s. Perhaps the vigorous literary journalism of John Updike and Gore Vidal comes closest to Wilson's in scope, though without his daunting critical authority. His was a nineteenth-century approach to criticism: the generalist as man of letters—judicial, didactic, authoritative—within a much more book-oriented culture than we have today.

The young Wilson tried his hand at everything. In one anonymously published twenty-page piece called "The All-Star Literary Vaudeville," he offered a sweeping yet entertaining account of virtually every writer on the scene. Like an expert tour guide, he takes on these writers with a no-nonsense directness that would become his hallmark and a remarkable self-assurance about what he thinks of each one of them. These really are encounters, a favorite word of his during the period. And even when he is wrong-headed or rudimentary, he engages the writers, some of them new and difficult, with the full weight of his own experience and sensibility. If a case can be made against the Wilson of *The Shores of Light*, it is that his almost perfect pitch for prose fiction deserts him when he turns to poetry. At one of the great moments in American poetry, he favors friends like Elinor Wylie or Millay while doing scant justice to major figures like Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane or William Carlos Williams. More a socially oriented critic than a technical one, he excels at connecting writers to their milieu, an approach more suited to the social and biographical texture of fiction than the linguistic density of poetry.

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Despite this limitation, *The Shores of Light* brings back the glory days of Wilson as a critic, wonderfully in tune with new literary movements, responding to a great creative surge as yet unappreciated by the world at large. Wilson once confessed that he loved talking about writers to people who hadn't yet read them, exactly the opposite of the academic critic who writes only for the initiated. And this love of introducing a writer to an audience, in print or in conversation, enabled Wilson to give free play to the narrative gifts never fully realized in his fiction. When he writes about Proust and Joyce in *Axel's Castle*, he actually sets about to recreate their work—not simply to retell the story, but to convey it in terms so nuanced with interpretation, irony, and judgment that it becomes something new, a redaction that is itself novelistic.

What makes the pieces so impressive when you reread them is not only his range and style but the supple agility of his dealings with different kinds of writers. In the middle of the book he even slips in a manifesto called "The Critic Who Does Not Exist" in which he maps out the warring critical and literary schools of the time, each propagating its own doctrine with little attention to other viewpoints, with no genuinely disinterested critic ("that is, a writer who is at once first-rate and nothing but a literary critic") prepared to challenge them. Wilson saw himself as just that critic, someone moving easily among many kinds of writers, constrained by no dogma or party spirit, committed to literature itself in all its protean variety.

Assembling his articles long after they first appeared—*The Shores of Light* did not come out until 1952, a sequel to the collection of more recent work called *Classics and Commercials*—Wilson dramatizes his critical position with a witty juxtaposition, setting a piece on H.L. Mencken alongside one on Woodrow Wilson's tenure as president of Princeton. We think of Mencken and Woodrow Wilson as polar opposites: Wilson so moralistic, impassioned, and rhetorical, Mencken ever the iconoclast, eagerly deflating moralistic cant. But Edmund Wilson presents them both as rigidly determined minds, repetitious, predictable, and inflexibly themselves. A part of Wilson is drawn to this: it helps explain his lifelong interest in the effects of New England Puritanism on later American culture. At the end of each piece he does a dialectical turn, showing how Mencken's dogmatic quality gives him power as a satirist, and honoring Woodrow Wilson's unbending idealism, which would cause him so much trouble in his conflict with the U.S. Senate.

Edmund Wilson had a streak of sympathy for both positions, especially the idealism that was in short supply during the Coolidge years when he wrote his piece. But the critical temperament, as he understood it, was just the opposite of what these men possessed, for they

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were strongly defined personalities who always knew exactly who and what they were. The later Edmund Wilson was more magisterial, but the young critic was gifted with Keatsian negative capability that opened him up to very different literary experiences. And the innovative, devil-may-care spirit of the 1920s was exactly the moment for such a critic.

The twenties concluded for him with the publication of *Axel's Castle* in 1931, which set the pattern for the later phases of his career. If the reviews collected in *The Shores of Light* show Wilson as the working critic, the writer in the trenches taking each new book as it comes, then *Axel's Castle* is the synthesis that rounds off the period, the longer view with which he took leave of each stage of his literary life. Wilson reached for permanence in the same way with *To the Finland Station* (1940), which provided a coda for his Marxist adventure in the 1930s, and *Patriotic Gore* (1962), the enduring result of his return to American culture and to his own origins during the 1940s and 1950s.

It's characteristic of these longer, more ambitious projects that Wilson, conscientious puritan that he was, persisted and carried through with them long after he had outlived the original impulse to write them. He had already converted to socialism by the time he completed his book on the modernists, just as he'd grown disaffected with Marxism and the Soviet Union when he put the finishing touches to his account of the revolutionary tradition from the 1790s to 1917. This is a tribute to Wilson's work ethic—he started it and was damn well going to finish it—but it gives these books a slightly odd character, even a certain incoherence. In *Axel's Castle*, for example, the great chapters on Proust and Joyce portray them not simply as formal innovators but as social observers deeply involved with the life of their times. But by the end of the book he comes close to condemning them for retreating to a symbolist castle, an impenetrable fastness of art for art's sake—exactly what he had already shown they did *not* do.

Wilson's own shifting views created a fissure within the book. They also led to his active political commitments of those years: the unsigned 1931 manifesto in which he urged liberals, radicals and progressives to "take Communism away from the Communists;" the Depression journalism and travel writing collected in *The American Jitters* (1932) and *Travels in Two Democracies* (1936); and finally to his masterpiece, *To the Finland Station*. This book was the result of his conversion to radicalism, which led him initially to take to the road for *The New Republic* to cover the local and human effects of the Depression, doing real reporting, not simply literary journalism. Wilson would always insist that the Depression had hit America with the impact of a flood or earthquake, a vast cataclysm that altered the whole landscape. Like many young intellectuals, he himself had

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already been skeptical of the booming business civilization of the 1920s; for them, as he later wrote in "The Literary Consequences of the Crash," "these years were not depressing but stimulating. One couldn't help being exhilarated at the sudden unexpected collapse of that stupid gigantic fraud. It gave us a new sense of freedom."

Down in the trenches, Wilson's work in the early thirties was not reviewing but interviewing. Like so many other newly radicalized writers, he set out to report on how ordinary Americans were coping with hard times. But gradually he conceived the project of writing a biographical history of the whole revolutionary tradition—an unlikely enterprise for someone with little economic or political background. *To the Finland Station* holds up today, I think, as his greatest book, not so much as intellectual history—he always remained dubious about the intricacies of Marxist dialectics—but as sheer human drama, with an immense sweep that carries us along even in these post-utopian times. Putting aside the sectarian polemics and scholastic debates so often fatal to radical intellectuals, he was able to bring something unique to bear on Marxism—the same critical sensibility he had brought to modernism. He examined Saint-Simon and Marx with all the restless curiosity he had just trained on T.S. Eliot and Gertrude Stein.

Many years later, V.S. Pritchett described it as "perhaps the only book on the grand scale to come out of the thirties—in either England or America. It contains, to a novel degree, the human history of an argument." *To a novel degree*: this is a finely phrased remark. It's ironic, in the light of Wilson's own limitations as a novelist, which he acknowledged when he compared himself to Fitzgerald, that *To the Finland Station* has many of the qualities of great fiction—a bold narrative thrust, striking larger-than-life characters—inflected with a mixture of irony and empathy toward the eccentric figures who made up the Marxist tradition. Above all they are intellectuals, caught up, as Wilson then was, in a passion for changing the world, for actually altering and affecting history. In a review for *Partisan Review* in 1940, Meyer Schapiro described how Wilson's portraits "impose themselves by their concreteness, finesse, and sympathy. . .like the great fictional characters of literature." But he also showed the connection to Wilson himself by noting that in this book "the conditions of intellectual work become as concrete, as unforgettable, as the moments of action." Wilson put flesh and blood on the revolutionary tradition without silencing his own critical voice.

Denis Donoghue has suggested that Wilson was not really a critic because he didn't exert pressure on a writer's language, but there are different ways to take note of language, as there are different kinds of critics. Always the portraitist, the historian of motive and behavior, in books like *To the Finland Station* and *Patriotic Gore* Wilson bears down on language as

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a key to individual temperament. He exerts this pressure on Marx's work, including his early poetry and student writings, scrutinizing his imagery to grasp the configurations of his mind. This was quite dramatic in the 1930s when Marxism was usually debated as doctrine and ideology, not as the written traces of any individual minds. Later Wilson would inspect General Grant's letters and memoirs just as keenly, for he was interested not only in style but in language as the basis for a social or psychological portrait, as if he were shaping a character in fiction.

This brings me to Wilson's third major project, *Patriotic Gore*, his book about the literature of the Civil War. This book emerged from his enormous dissatisfaction with contemporary America after 1940, which led to his withdrawal to the country, his turn towards autobiography, his fascination with his own family background, and his gradual disengagement from the current critical scene. *Patriotic Gore* is preceded by a notorious introduction that sees nations in biological terms, devouring each other like "sea slugs." This is often seen as arbitrary and unconnected to the book—some of Wilson's friends tried to convince him to remove it—but it's intrinsic to the mood in which he wrote the work as a whole. *Patriotic Gore* demonstrates not only his recoil into the American past but his attraction to those qualities—essentially qualities of republican virtue—that he could not find in the public world of the American present.

If *To the Finland Station* is about personality, as revealed in the youthful passion to change the world, then *Patriotic Gore* is about character, as it was reflected in traits like stoicism, persistence, fortitude, skepticism, and clarity of mind. Wilson's new heroes are no longer intellectuals but aging warriors like Grant, Lee, Sherman, and that staunch ex-warrior, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. The book begins with an unlikely revolutionary, Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose extraordinarily *humane* exposure of the Southern slave system derives from her faith in family values and her reading of the character of its participants. But Wilson's book finds its center in the unflappable figure of Grant—in battle utterly unconscious of danger, then, as a dying man, stoically completing his memoirs in the teeth of great suffering, to provide for his family after his death. "In what Grant did and in what he wrote," Wilson finds "something of the driving force, the exalted moral certainty, of Lincoln and Mrs. Stowe." Wilson admires not only Grant the man but also the plain stylist, expressing exactly what he wanted to say with strength and simplicity "in the fewest well-chosen words." His Grant was the writer whose prose intrigued both Matthew Arnold and Gertrude Stein. "These literary qualities, so unobtrusive," says Wilson, "are evidence of a natural fineness of character, mind, and taste."

So this, I think, is where Wilson himself came to rest, as an old man no doubt identifying with Grant's infirmities as well as his temperament,

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admiring "the dynamic force and definiteness of his personality." This is Wilson as a rock-ribbed American character, no longer the Keatsian seismograph of the cultural and political scene but withdrawn, like his father before him, into "a pocket of the past." Wilson could be immensely eloquent about this old fogeyism, as he liked to describe it. At one point he called himself a man more or less of the eighteenth century, at other times a man of the 1920s. But for all of the diversity of his interests in his last years—exploring Russian literature, learning Hebrew and writing about the Dead Sea Scrolls, going to Haiti, studying Hungarian—in the end he became something of a nativist whose fundamental values were invested in a Roman and republican ideal he linked to people like Grant and Holmes. In the peroration to *Patriotic Gore*, after some eight hundred pages, he describes the aged Holmes as "perhaps the last Roman," and as "a just man, a man of the old America, who having proved himself early in the Civil War, had persisted and continued to function through everything that had happened since, and had triumphed in remaining faithful to some kind of traditional ideal."

What an odd yet moving place for Edmund Wilson's last phase: the free-living modernist of the 1920s transformed into the quintessential American of an earlier era; the critic of Keatsian receptivity becoming the eccentric, quirky Johnsonian figure we knew from Wilson's later years. So we conclude where we began, with Wilson's personality as a barrier between us and his work. It may well be that the more we learn about Wilson the less we like him. This certainly happened to me when I first reviewed his journals of the 1930s, with their detached clinical record of his sex life. But he lived his writing life on a heroic scale.

As a reader he remained omnivorous to the end. In his last years he was rediscovering minor American realists like Harold Frederic and Henry Blake Fuller. His passion to record his life and thinking never abated; he can be compared to the great Victorians in his plenitude and persistence, in the strength of his work ethic and the moral calling he brought to the practice of criticism. His curiosity, his gift for languages, kept him from turning provincial. At a time when other critics grew enamored of technique, he used everything from social history and biography to psychoanalysis to hold fast to the elusive human dimension of literature. He saw reading and writing as encounters colored by sensibility, style, personal history, and social practice. He never lost confidence in his own power to make sense of his impressions, to translate other people's language into limpid, terse and resonant language of his own. As his personal presence fades, the real Edmund Wilson, the one who matters most, survives in his books.

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STEPHEN MILLER

Edmund Burke Revisited

Edmund Burke, who died two hundred years ago on July 9, 1797, remains a surprisingly current figure in American politics—invoked by pundits and politicians across the political spectrum. Conservatives cite Burke because they agree with his view that "religion is the basis of civil society" and agree with his strong support for what we now call community values. A recent piece by a *Wall Street Journal* columnist was entitled "Why Edmund Burke is a Packer Fan"—the assumption being that Burke would support the community-based capitalism that obtains in Green Bay, where roughly 1900 citizens show their loyalty to the Green Bay Packers by owning shares in the team.

Some liberals, however, claim that modern conservatives ignore the wisdom of Burke. Modern conservatives, they suggest, are un-Burkean insofar as they make too much of market forces and advocate radical measures that could undermine America's constitutional order; e.g., they often propose amendments to the Constitution or even call for a new constitutional convention. And they note that modern conservatives have a negative view of the political vocation, whereas Burke always defended it. According to Burke, it is wrong to assume that all men in public office pursue their private interests. "If all men who act in a public situation are equally selfish, corrupt, and venal, what reason can be given for desiring any sort of change, which besides the evils which must attend all changes can be productive of no possible advantage?"

Is Burke's conservatism different from modern conservatism? Was he even a conservative? Well-known scholars hold widely differing views of Burke's politics. According to Isaiah Berlin, Burke was an ultraconservative who influenced the thinking of Joseph de Maistre—the leading nineteenth-century French reactionary. In Berlin's view, Burke might have been a Petainiste—that is, a supporter of the Vichy regime during World War II. By contrast, Conor Cruise O'Brien suggests that Burke should not even be called a conservative: "Burke was no more a reactionary than Isaiah Berlin. He was a liberal and pluralist opponent of the French Revolution."

I would argue that Burke was neither an ultraconservative nor a liberal but, rather, a progressive conservative. He was an honorary member of the Scottish Enlightenment, for he supported economic and political

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progress within the framework of England's established institutions. In *The Portable Enlightenment* Isaac Kramnick calls Burke "the gravedigger of the Enlightenment," but he should have said that Burke was the gravedigger of the French Enlightenment, for Burke disliked the French Enlightenment's virulent anticlericalism and disembodied rationalism.

It is not easy, though, to categorize Burke's politics because the political labels we use today do not exactly fit late eighteenth-century English politics, where the political parties were shifting alliances of aristocrats rather than political parties in the modern sense. Burke is also hard to categorize because he was a prolific writer on many questions in the course of a political career that spanned roughly thirty-five years—twenty-eight of them as a Member of Parliament.

Burke's career was marked by controversy right from the start. When he was about to be appointed Secretary to the Marquess of Rockingham, who was the head of the Rockingham Whigs—a party that held office for only two brief periods during Burke's long Parliamentary career—the Duke of Newcastle warned Rockingham that Burke was an Irish Papist educated in France by the Jesuits and sent into England as a spy. Burke persuaded Rockingham that the allegations were unfounded; although Burke's mother was a Catholic, he was raised as an Anglican and was educated at the Protestant Trinity College in Dublin. Rockingham hired Burke, yet to some degree the calumny stuck; throughout Burke's career he was dogged by the suspicion that he was soft on "Popery"—i.e., Roman Catholicism—because of his Irish background and his Catholic family connections. Horace Walpole and others called him an Irish adventurer.

Despite the disadvantage of his background, the "Irish adventurer" made his mark on English society when he was fairly young. When Burke entered parliament in 1765 at the age of thirty-six, he was already a well-known intellectual: the editor of a distinguished journal (the *Annual Register*), the author of a highly regarded book on aesthetics (*A Philosophical Enquiry concerning the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*), and a member of the famous club presided over by Samuel Johnson. He quickly rose to political eminence, becoming one of the leading speakers in Parliament—known for his eloquent speeches—and one of the chief spokesmen for the Rockingham Whigs. His success did not surprise his close friend Johnson, who often said that Burke was the most intelligent man he knew and a great conversationalist. Burke, he said in 1776, *"is* an extraordinary man. His stream of mind is perpetual. . . . We who know Burke, know, that he will be one of the first men in this country."

Burke's political career flourished in the 1770s. During that decade, he gave a number of brilliant speeches in which he outlined what English policy should be toward the American colonies. He came reluctantly to the

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conclusion that it was prudent to support American independence because the political trust between Britain and the American colonies—what he called "the unsuspecting confidence that removes all difficulties"—had been completely dissipated and could never be restored.

Though Burke's support for American independence sets him apart from "conservatives" such as Johnson, his view of religion was a complex mixture of conservative and liberal elements. In 1772, he opposed a petition on the part of some Anglican clergymen to be allowed to take an oath supporting the Bible rather than the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. Burke thought the request was absurd. If the petitioners do not want to subscribe to the doctrine of the Church of England, "they have free liberty to assemble a congregation of their own. . . ." He thought it was politically imprudent to tamper with the traditional practices of the established church unless there was "intolerable abuse," and in this case there was no such abuse. According to Burke, any criticism of the practices of the established Church of England constituted an attack on England's constitutional order. An established church, Burke argued, made it less likely that religious differences would lead to civil discord. "I think it [the Church of England] is better calculated...for keeping peace amongst the different sects, and of affording to them a reasonable protection, than any other System. Being something in a middle, it is better disposed to moderate."

At the same time, Burke took the "liberal" position of favoring toleration for most religious sects, including non-Christians. In a letter written in 1775, he says: "I would give a full civil protection, in which I include an immunity, from all disturbance of their publick religious worship, and a power of teaching in schools, as well as Temples, to Jews, Mahometans and even Pagans; especially if they are already possessed of any of those advantages by long and prescriptive usage; which is as sacred in this exercise of Rights, as in any other." Burke was disturbed that many Protestants did not support toleration for Catholics. He told a leading figure in the Scottish Presbyterian church that "I wish, along with you, that we may not be so far Presbyterians, or Episcopals, as to forget that we are Christians. . . ."

Burke was not interested in weighing the truth of any particular religious doctrine; he was concerned only with the effect a change in traditional religious practice might have on political stability. The only ground for refusing to tolerate a religious sect is a civil one. "In my opinion, ...a magistrate, whenever he goes to put any restraint upon religious freedom, can only do it upon this ground,—that the person dissenting [does so]...in order to raise a faction in the state...and to destroy the peace of his country."

The main threat to civil society, Burke argued, came from atheists. Disturbed by the atheism of the *philosophes*, many of whom he met while on a short trip to France in 1773, Burke says that "the most horrid and

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cruel blow that can be offered to civil society is through atheism." In Burke's view atheism generally went hand-in-hand with political radicalism. He thought the Rational Dissenters, who believed in God but did not believe in the divinity of Christ, were little better than atheists. In *A Letter to the Sherrifs of Bristol* (1777) Burke is clearly referring to the Rational Dissenters when he attacks those who, "corrupting religion," have also offered speculations that are "destructive to all authority. . . ." According to Burke, "they are endeavouring to tear up, along with practical liberty, all the foundations of human society, all equity and justice, religion and order."

Burke had no quarrel with those who were not religious so long as they did not publicly attack religion. He grew to dislike David Hume because Hume publicly attacked religion, but he remained on close terms with the irreligious Adam Smith—Hume's close friend—because Smith refrained from attacking religion in general (though in the *Wealth of Nations* Smith argues that Roman Catholicism impeded political and economic progress). Burke and Smith held each other in high esteem, even though Smith disagreed with Burke about the importance of an established church (he favored full religious liberty). When Burke was installed as Lord Rector of Glasgow University in 1784, he spent several days with Smith.

Some observers have argued that Burke's veneration for prescription, by which he meant a respect for institutions that have worked reasonably well for a long period of time, is at odds with Smith's praise of market forces. Burke, however, did not regard prescription as a blanket defense of the status quo. Prescription "is a presumption in favor of any settled scheme of government against any untried project," but it is only a presumption. Burke was a reformer for much of his political career; he opposed slavery, favored penal reform, and called for a great reduction in the number of governmental sinecures. He also admired the *Wealth of Nations* and saw no contradiction between stressing the importance of prescription and recommending the expansion of commerce. Though he admitted that it was sometimes difficult to say where the line should be drawn between the state and the market, he agreed with Smith that the state played an essential role in promoting political stability. Burke's brand of conservatism does differ from modern American conservatism, but not as much as some liberals have suggested, for Burke wanted to cut back on government and increase the scope of market forces.

In the 1780s, Burke's reputation and standing in his party gradually waned—especially after the death of Rockingham in 1782. The party, which was now headed by Charles James Fox, soon grew tired of Burke's effort to impeach Warren Hastings for his supposedly corrupt conduct as

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Governor-General of Bengal—an effort that ended in failure when Hastings was acquitted in 1795. Burke was considered to be somewhat unbalanced—a man who exaggerated the evils of British rule in India. A cartoon that appeared in 1785 shows most MPs leaving Parliament while Burke is speaking—the point being that Burke's speeches about British policy in India had become rambling and boring.

In the 1790s Burke's standing in the party collapsed completely because he strongly disagreed with Fox about the French Revolution. Fox thought the Revolution was "one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind," whereas Burke thought the Revolution had unleashed forces that posed a threat to all established regimes in Europe. In 1792, less than a year after he had broken publicly with Fox, an embittered and angry Burke wrote Earl Fitzwilliam, the nephew and heir of Rockingham: "Thank God that I have been completely separated from all the Partizans of that sort of Liberty"—i.e. the radical idea of liberty that Fox and his supporters condoned. Burke resigned his seat in 1794.

When Burke attacked the Revolution before it was widely condemned by the English establishment, the old charge against him that he was a crypto-Jesuit was dredged up. He was accused of being against the Revolution because he was a friend of Catholicism. A cartoon that appeared in 1790 portrays Burke as a Jesuit Don Quixote: "The Knight of the Woeful Countenance Going to Extirpate The [French] National Assembly." On Burke's horse is a copy of his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Many members of Burke's own party, including Fox, also insinuated that his anti-French stance was partly motivated by the desire to get a pension from the Pitt government, which was growing increasingly concerned about the Revolution.

The main charge levelled against Burke was inconsistency. Fox and others pointed out that Burke had praised the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and had argued that the American colonists deserved independence, so they could not understand why he didn't support the French Revolution, which in their minds was the heir to these two revolutions. They agreed with Thomas Jefferson, who said: "The Revolution in France does not astonish me so much as the revolution of Mr. Burke."

The charge of inconsistency was unfair for two reasons. First, Burke had always argued that prudence was important in political affairs, and he thought it was prudent to support American independence. Secondly, Burke had always said that religion was "one of the bonds of society," and anticlerical violence marked the French Revolution from the start: a famous cry of the Revolution in its early stages was "hang the bishops from the lampposts!" and in 1790 the French National Assembly nationalized church property. According to Burke, the revolutionaries were

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driven by a passionate hatred of religion: "the first, last and middle Object of their Hostility, is religion."

In his writings of the 1790s, Burke often dwelled on the evils of anti-clericalism. The French revolutionaries, he said, have championed "an insolent irreligion in opinions and practices." The nationalization of church property, Burke argues, was only the first step in the National Assembly's war against traditional religion. "These enthusiasts do not scruple to avow their opinion, that a state can subsist without any religion better than with one. . . ." The attacks against traditional religion, Burke says, were part of a larger scheme to destroy all established authority. "The Republicans in France, and their associates in other countries, make it always their business, and often their publick profession, to destroy all traces of antient establishments. . . ." Tearing down ancient establishments, Burke argues, rends the fabric of civil society. Instead of manners that nourish affection and trust, there is revolutionary fervor, which foments hatred and distrust.

One word sums up Burke's view of the force behind the Revolution: enthusiasm, a term that in the eighteenth century often meant fanaticism. The Revolution, he said in 1791, is "this strange, nameless, wild, enthusiastic thing. . . ." In the past, enthusiasm usually had a religious content, but the French Revolution was driven by a secular enthusiasm that took the form of political millennialism—the conviction that the Revolution would usher in a golden age of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Burke thought political millennialism was a destructive force. "It is now obvious to the world, that a theory concerning government may become as much a cause of fanaticism as a dogma in religion." In the name of revolutionary patriotism horrible crimes had been committed already and would continue to be committed. Burke predicted that the revolutionaries would have no qualms about killing the king.

Political millennialists, Burke says, not only hate prescription—i.e. tradition—they also dislike prejudice, which for Burke is mainly a positive notion: the stock of opinions one has absorbed, so to speak, from one's family and background. Burke doesn't say that all forms of prejudice are good, but he suggests that many are. "Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit; and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature." Society cannot function without "just prejudice" because it promotes morality. "The moral sentiments, so nearly connected with early prejudice as to be almost one and the same thing, will assuredly not live long under a discipline, which has for its basis the destruction of all prejudices. . . ."

Prescription and prejudice are the basis of what Burke calls manners, by which he means a respect and affection for society's established institu-

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tions. Manners are necessary for the functioning of civil society. "Manners are of more importance than laws. . . .The law touches us but here and there, and now and then." The citizen with manners is like the woman in Robert Frost's poem "The Silken Tent," who is "loosely bound by countless ties of love and thought. . . ." The Revolution caused French citizens to become unmoored from their traditional civilizing ties.

A society in which people have lost the internal controls that stem from manners is unlikely to remain free. "I doubt much, very much indeed, whether France is at all ripe for liberty on any standard," Burke said in 1791. Given the intemperate passions of a people infected by revolutionary enthusiasm, only despotism can prevent total lawlessness. "Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

It deeply disturbed Burke that in the early 1790s many people in Britain did not see the dangers of the Revolution. In *Reflections*, he attacks a pro-Revolution speech that Richard Price—a leading Rational Dissenter—made on the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution. Price, he says, was one of several ministers "who under the name of religion teach little else than wild and dangerous politics." These ministers were against all forms of established authority. "It is no wonder therefore, that with these ideas of every thing in their constitution and government at home, either in church or state, as illegitimate and usurped, or, at best as a vain mockery, they look abroad with an eager and passionate enthusiasm." Burke worried that such pro-French radicals might "draw us into a connexion and concurrence with that nation [France] upon the principles of its proceedings. . . ."

Perhaps Burke exaggerated the danger the Revolution posed to Britain—though some historians argue that Burke's fears were legitimate—but was he right to strongly attack the Revolution itself? His friend Edmund Gibbon agreed with Burke about the Revolution, and there are passages in the final edition of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that suggest he also had strong reservations about the Revolution. In the eyes of many historians the Revolution was on balance a force for progress, but in recent years a number of historians—among them Francois Furet, Simon Schama, and William Doyle—have offered a darker assessment. In the *Oxford History of the French Revolution* (1989), Doyle says the Revolution "was an economic disaster for France"—especially for the poor: "Nobody. . .suffered more than the poor and the sick, over several generations, from the blind destruction of established institutions before viable alternatives had been devised and funded." Echoing Burke, Doyle

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also speaks of "the monumental misjudgment which produced the Revolution's quarrel with the Catholic church," and he argues that there was "something horribly new and unimaginable in the prospect of a government systematically executing its opponents by the cartload for months on end. . . ."

Burke's response to the French Revolution, then, is consistent with his progressive conservatism. In his view, the Revolution was a setback for progress because it destroyed the manners necessary for the functioning of civil society. As he said in 1795: "I wished to warn the people against the greatest of all evils: a blind and furious spirit of innovation, under the name of reform." He was for reform, but the French revolutionaries were radicals, not reformers.

In the 1790s Burke was not only worried about the situation in France; he was also concerned about the political situation in his native land. Ireland was a nightmare version of his recipe for a healthy civil society because there prescription and prejudice propped up tyranny. Whereas the established church of England "harmonizes with our civil constitution, with the frame and fashion of our Society, and with the general Temper of the people," the established Protestant church of Ireland was an instrument of oppression because it supported a ruling class that Burke called "an armed and Systematick Tyranny." Burke despised this ruling class; he detested its "insane prejudices, and furious temper. . . ." Thus the prejudices of the Protestant Ascendancy were not good prejudices: "I think I can hardly over-rate the malignity of the principles of [the] Protestant Ascendancy, as they affect Ireland. . . ."

Although Burke strongly condemned the Protestant Ascendancy, saying that it was "repugnant to humanity and good sense that the unity of any Establishment, civil or religious, can ever depend upon the misery of those who live under it," he did not agree with Johnson that this tyrannical establishment could only be destroyed by the end of British rule. It would be "unnatural," Burke said, for Ireland to become independent. If Ireland were separated from England, she "would certainly lose all her Tranquillity, [and] all her prosperity. . . ." Burke never lost faith in the English connection. "My poor opinion," he said the year he died, "is, that the closest connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, is essential to the well being...of the two Kingdoms." If Burke had taken Johnson's position on Ireland his political career would have ended, since his patron and other members of his party had vast estates in Ireland, but Burke seems to have genuinely believed that London would eventually rein in the Protestant Ascendancy.

In the 1790s Burke hoped he could improve the political situation in Ireland by persuading Protestants and Catholics that they were fellow Christians who should unite against their common enemy—the atheisti-

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cal French Jacobins. This appeal to Christian unity was not likely to succeed, since Burke himself argued that religion was not a motivating factor in the increasing distrust between the Protestant Ascendancy and the Catholics (many Protestant Dissenters in Ireland also disliked the Ascendancy). "The name 'Protestant'," Burke says, "becomes nothing more or better than the name of a persecuting faction, with a relation of some sort of theological hostility to others, but without any sort of ascertained tenets of its own, upon the ground of which it persecutes other men. . . ." Because the Protestant ruling class was not driven by religious sentiment, it was likely to be more vicious than the "old [religious] persecutors," who in theory at least welcomed converts.

The distrust and hatred that divided Ireland, Burke says, were stoked less by religion than by historical memories. In *Reflections* he warns that history can be perverted into a savage god. "In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind. It may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in church and state, and supplying the means of keeping alive, or reviving dissensions and animosities and adding fuel to civil fury."

If history is used to fuel civil discord, is progress possible? Burke hoped for progress, but he worried that the new secular passions might destroy Ireland. He was right to be gloomy about Ireland: a year after he died these secular passons resulted in a ghastly civil war, and these secular passions still drive many people in Northern Ireland today. Burke would probably not be surprised to learn that every year a Catholic priest of republican sympathies says mass at the grave of Wolfe Tone—the Irish nationalist who committed suicide when he was captured by the British in 1798—even though the Protestant-born Tone was a Jacobin enthusiast who despised Catholicism. In this priest's case, religion takes a back seat to nationalism.

Burke, then, was a Cassandra who warned that a new era of European disorder was coming into existence, an era in which "men are infinitely more disposed to heat themselves with political than religious controversies." Burke, it has to be said, to some degree abetted these dark passions because anti-Semitism crops up in his writings of the 1790s. In *Reflections* he says that "Jew brokers" in France were making major financial gains, especially through the sale of expropriated church property, and he warns that "Jew brokers" were ready to do the same thing in England. Undoubtedly some of the financiers were Jews, but it was nonsense to say that only Jews profited from the financial upheaval caused by the Revolution. This paranoid anti-Semitic rhetoric influenced European ultraconservatives, especially the French Catholic Right, which argued that

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the Revolution was a vast conspiracy of *philosophes*, freemasons, infidels, and Jews. However, Burke's role in the development of ultraconservative thought should not be exaggerated, for there are only a handful of negative references to Jews in his writings.

Despite such lapses into reactionary rhetoric, Burke should mainly be regarded as a progressive conservative—as someone who thought prescription and prejudice were generally positive forces that made for a stable society in which reform could take place. The road from Burke leads not to nineteenth-century ultraconservative thought but to the progressive conservatism of Alexis de Tocqueville. Burke would have agreed with Tocqueville's remark that "I have never been more convinced than I am today that only liberty...and religion, through a combined effort, are capable of raising men out of the mire in which democratic equality naturally plunges them as soon as one of these two supports is lacking."

Though Burke eloquently defended the English establishment, he knew he was an outsider who would always be regarded by some members of the Establishment as an Irish adventurer. In the 1790s, he deeply resented the members of his party who impugned his motives for attacking the French Revolution. In 1795, when the Duke of Bedford—a close supporter of Fox—attacked him for accepting a pension from the Pitt government, Burke exploded in *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (1795), which is a scathing attack on the Duke and a defense of his own political career. Burke says that he earned his political success; it was not something he acquired by virtue of his birth: "I was not, like his Grace of Bedford, swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into a Legislator. . . .At every step of my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my Country, by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home." Throughout his long career in English politics, it must have rankled Burke that he often was obliged to show his passport.

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THOMAS DOHERTY

Olaudah Equiano's Journeys: The Geography of a Slave Narrative

"I believe there are a few events in my life which have not happened to many," Olaudah Equiano remarks at the beginning of a memoir that promises only to be "interesting." Such calculated modesty is typical of a certain kind of eighteenth-century literature that invites a lowering of the guard scant sentences before a sucker punch to the sensibilities. After lulling the unwary by a recitation of mundane matters in a sedate tone, the Gentle Reader is suddenly launched into a swirling tempest of brash melodrama and thrilling adventure. At times Equiano's story seems the product of an overactive imagination with a total disregard for the laws of narrative probability—not to say contempt for a protagonist bounced scattershot about the globe and beset by a Homeric inventory of wildly implausible escapades. Kidnapped, enslaved, shipwrecked, imprisoned; in turn a sailor, bookkeeper, merchant, musician, hairdresser, and writer; the target of gunfire, artillery barrage, and random assaults; the engineer of hairbreadth escapes blessed by divine providence and effected by the skin of his teeth—Olaudah Equiano seems a picaresque hero caught on the cusp of the English novel between Daniel Defoe and Laurence Sterne. That the interesting narrative is all too true and the narrator and the author allegedly one and the same is all the more reason to proceed with caution.

First published in London in 1789, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* is officially deemed a "slave narrative," perhaps the first fully realized example of the genre. Yet the librarian's classification system fails to chart the coordinates of Equiano's life or the scope of his vision. Any single standard of measurement seems promising but incomplete. A stylized re-creation of experience in well-wrought prose, it warrants a purely literary appreciation. An eyewitness testimony to a rich sampling of eighteenth-century affairs, it stands as an invaluable historical record. A passionate plea for social justice, it registers as a timely political document. Of course, like its author—a premature multi-hyphenate Anglo-African-American—the work is less the sum of its parts than an expression of the tension among them.

Whatever tack taken on the *Interesting Narrative*, the imaginative leap to Equiano's eighteenth-century world is no greater than the distance through geographical and cultural space traversed by the man himself. Born around

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1745 in the central African kingdom of Benin, he was kidnapped into slavery at the age of eleven by "stout mahogany colored men" of the Ibo tribe. Still in the hands of "these sable destroyers of human rights," the boy was brought from the interior to the Niger delta on the west coast of Africa. Standing on the beach, he looked up and beheld a huge vessel commanded by pale, demonic creatures with ruddy faces, long hair, and harsh voices. The child's wide-eyed wonder soon gave way to stark horror. Capricious and cruel, the chalky figures might be monstrous sorcerers or, more likely, evil spirits come to earth to bedevil mankind. In chains, in terror, the boy was transported, with hundreds of his countrymen, in the bowels of a slave ship bound for the West Indies, human marketplace to the world. The nightmarish hegira over the Atlantic Ocean, the "middle passage" from Africa to America as cargo in the putrid holds below deck, was a phantasmagoria of torment—starvation, disease, rape, flogging, murder, and suicide.

Equiano's participant-observer account of the middle passage is the most reliable and articulate testimony of the slave's journey across the Atlantic in bondage. His is not a report from the captain's quarters or an oral recollection coaxed from an aged freeman, but a vivid and detailed re-creation of felt experience. Grasping for words ("absolutely pestilential," "intolerably loathsome") Equiano evokes the full sensorium of foul smells and choking atmosphere, whispered conversations and desperate speculations. For some readers, then and since, the very intensity of the rendering cast doubt on its authenticity, as if a childhood memory of trauma could not be vivid, tenacious, and true. Poring over Equiano's jump-cut transition from the Eden of Africa to the hell of the middle passage, the modern reader will likely unspool memories of Alex Haley's *Roots*, best-selling novel and television miniseries—though, unlike Haley, Equiano never shrinks from indicting his fellow Africans for complicity in the slave trade.

Corralled into the slave pens of Barbados, Equiano begins life in his new world as a consumer item. In a caricature of the mint julep image of Southern slavery, he is first put to work as personal attendant to a convalescent plantation owner. While fanning the man with a palm leaf, the boy keeps an eye on a wall clock that he thinks is keeping an eye on him, ticking constantly and tolling hourly, sounding sentinel on his servitude. Evincing a native brightness and easygoing temperament, Equiano is spotted by a household visitor named Captain Pascal, an Atlantic seafarer with a good eye for merchandise. Pascal bargains for and buys the alert child, saving him from the backbreaking toil of the field hand for the open air drudgery of the deckhand. Over Equiano's vehement protest, the Captain christens him "Gustavus Vassa," (the original Vassa was a sixteenth-century Swedish king, the Nordic appellation a double joke on the black African condemned to serve as "vassal" to the highest bidder). Thus newly labeled, Equiano sails to Great Britain, where he resides with

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good-hearted families who dote upon him like a favored house pet. He learns the English language, embraces the Christian faith, and adapts tolerably well to civil society.

Sent back to sea as a cabin boy aboard a merchant of war, Equiano witnesses the siege of Louisberg in 1758 and fights in the Mediterranean during the Seven Years War. With the exigencies of naval combat distracting his overseers from a steady application of the prerogatives of ownership, he almost forgets his status. But the relative security of seafaring life is abruptly terminated when Captain Pascal, his *ersatz* father figure, betrays him for a tidy profit. Taken back to the West Indies, Equiano is sold again, this time to a Quaker merchant whose religious scruples do not outweigh his business acumen.

In the service of the enterprising Quaker, Equiano proves himself a bargain. "There was scarcely any part of his business or household affairs in which I was not occasionally engaged," he recollects with pride. "I often supplied the place of a clerk, in receiving and delivering cargoes to the ships, in tending stores, and delivering goods, and besides this, I used to shave and dress my master, when convenient, and take care of his horse, and when it was necessary, which was very often, I worked likewise on board his different vessels." At sea in trade throughout the West Indies (sometimes, to his shame, the slave trade) the still-adolescent Equiano now strides the very decks below which he once cringed in terror. He masters the skills of the professional sailor, learns such ciphering and navigation as is permitted him, and bides his time. Always, he keeps his eyes open for the main chance—to insinuate himself into favor, to learn a profitable skill, to hustle commodities—so to secure his freedom by purchase or flight. Through the kind intervention of a benefactor and the caprice of his master (held to a glib promise he made in haste), Equiano accomplishes the goal in 1769, buying what was rightfully his for forty pounds sterling.

For an African prowling the West Indies and the seaboard cities of Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, the lot of the freeman holds its own humiliations and dangers. A master at least offered some protection from white scoundrels who saw a free black man as a walking incitement. Routinely cheated in business and abused for amusement, Equiano opts to make his way back to "old England," the less worse of his possible worlds. There he gets religion, but his roving spirit presently gets the better of him. Like Melville's Ishmael, Equiano takes to the sea when bored or broke. With his new employer (not master) Dr. Charles Irving, he travels with the Phipps Expedition to the Arctic in search of the elusive Northwest Passage. Moving from polar desolation to tropical lushness, he next accompanies Dr. Irving to the Mosquito Coast in Central America, where (more ironies) he serves as overseer on a plantation carved out of the jungle and the flesh of the indigenous population. A scrape with involuntary servitude brings him too

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close to his former status for comfort and reminds him of his tenuous circumstances. In 1783 Equiano returns to England, for good this time. He publishes his narrative, marries, lectures against the slave trade, and does what he can for the betterment of his fellow Africans until his death in 1797.

The fascinating narrative of Olaudah Equiano might have gone unrecorded had it not been for two congruent phenomena of the Age of Enlightenment: the rise of anti-slavery sentiment in England and the emergence of a popular audience for true (or sold as true) tales of personal adventure and captivity. For bourgeois readers of the eighteenth century, the first literate class that was not either aristocratic or clerical (and the group that made up what today would be called Equiano's "target audience"), the *Interesting Narrative* made for a "good read" in two senses. The successful formula for a newly emergent literary form—the novel—proved readily adaptable to the novelistic dimensions of Equiano's life: a calibrated balance between piety and pathos, orthodox sentiment and wild adventure. Informative digressions and uplifting instruction filled out the package. As a minor player in some of the great dramas of eighteenth-century cultural life, this well-traveled narrator provided inside-dopester details and from-the-bottom-up reports on the slave marketplaces of the West Indies and the American South, the religious fervor of the Great Awakening, the Seven Years War, the search for the Northwest Passage, and the beginnings of agitation against the slave trade in Great Britain. Achieving fame and some fortune for its author, the work went through eight editions in Great Britain. It was also published in Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, and, in 1791, as far afield as New York.

Equiano's literal journeys about the globe parallel his metaphorical progress—political (from slavery to freedom), spiritual (from degeneracy to salvation), and philosophical (from ignorance to knowledge). Traversed in life, each is undertaken again in language and set off against the territorial boundaries of literary convention. At a time when accounts of kidnapping and enslavement were written from only one point of view, his tale reversed the accustomed perspective of captive and captor. By 1789 British and American readers were well acquainted with the New World's special contribution to world literature, the captivity narrative. At once spiritually correct and unwholesomely titillating, the immensely popular genre cast European whites into the clutches of savage Indians in the unknown interiors of America. Sympathy for the captive was never in doubt, portraits of the captors seldom less than fiendish. Typical is the narrative of Mary Rowlandson, a white Puritan woman taken prisoner by the Wampanoag Indians of Massachusetts during King Philip's War in 1675-1676. Rowlandson painted her Indian tormentors as quite corporeal devils risen from the depths of hell, demons dancing on the face of the earth. "It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of

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sheep torn by wolves," she wrote, her prose steeped in the imagination of damnation, "all of them stripped naked by a company of hell hounds, roaming, singing, ranting, and insulting, as if they would have torn our very hearts out."

Against this convention, Equiano forced a confrontation with another perspective and coaxed a realignment of instinctive allegiances: "The white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty." Summoning up himself as a boy on the African seacoast—bewildered and besieged, gazing upward at the monumental vessels of the Europeans, caught "in a world of bad spirits"—he locks the reader into an eye-opening identification and a radically new perspective, that of a desperately forlorn African, a no-longer-alien Other, afraid of being cannibalized by white savages.

That literary achievement is itself an expression of freedom, but for this born teller of tales it is also a release from the silence that smothered his earliest aspirations. As a young boy enduring the middle passage, Equiano cannot give voice to his confusion or make sense of the cacophony of barbarian tongues. Again and again, the inability to communicate is his unspeakable terror. No wonder he remains linguistically superstitious for the rest of his life and retains a magician's faith in the transforming power of the uttered word. Characteristically, it is blasphemy that offends most deeply this man for whom language was the way out of slavery and the best weapon for its abolition, for whom the Europeans' curses and insults stung like a whip. He tells a parable about a swearing sailor, who damns his eyes and in turn has his eyes "damned" by blindness. Of the Mosquito Indians he can give no greater praise than to observe that their tongue includes no oaths or slurs.

Knowing the power of words to cut, Equiano knows too that words can cut both ways. For Enlightened readers of the eighteenth century the typeset word was holy writ. The medium of print was invested with an almost sacred aura, its mastery the way to communion with God and immortality among men. The Christian Protestant saw it as the road to personal salvation; the secular democrat as visible proof of rights secured and bound by contract. The pathbreaking subtitle of the *Interesting Narrative*—"written by himself"—asserts more than authorship. In an age that equated literacy with humanity, the ability to manipulate language in print and render experience through the prism of articulate prose was a broadside rebuff to racist expectations. Through prose, creatures become creators. Quotations from Milton, Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, contemporary historians, and above all the Bible, not only filter Equiano's experience but underscore the erudition of this self-taught writer. To grant speech is to grant human consciousness, to acknowledge interior depth and intellectual faculty in the brute. Equiano's glib mastery of the English tongue extricates him from more than one tough

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spot, but it also inflames the anger of owners unaccustomed to a possession who can keep up his side of the conversation. Failing to best his newly acquired slave in a debate on human equality, a British captain must resort to threats of violence, hissing that Equiano "talked too much English." In writing, this propensity for linguistic one-upmanship and smart-mouth prolixity gets free rein. Quick-witted and fast-talking, Equiano leavens even slavery with moments of humor. He is a master of the droll aside, the fish-out-of-water incongruity, and the burlesque of low comedy. In the case of the dying bequest from an allegedly wealthy silversmith, he conjures an episode of extended comic invention. A sure sign of a secure ego, he does not exempt his own foolishness from satire as when, during the Phipps Expedition, he nearly blows himself up (and the ship) while keeping a journal by candlelight near the gunpowder stock.

If verbal dexterity and literary talent were defining qualities of that most esteemed of contemporary models, the man of letters, literacy also makes Equiano a man of God. Both as a profession of Christian conscience and evidence of intimate acquaintance with the printed words of revelation, the Bible informs his spiritual journey and buttresses his political purpose. For the African agitator, the Good Book offers good shelter, a protected pulpit from which to attack Anglo-American slavery. Coming from within the Christian church and measured against biblical injunctions to brotherly love, the rhetoric against slavery was tactically crafty and devastatingly effective. He taunts the in-name-only believers as "ye nominal Christians" and "tender Christian depredators." A local law in Barbados absolving white men for murdering Negroes is an act "which would disgrace an assembly of those who are called barbarians; and for its injustice and insanity would shock the morality and common sense of a Samaide or Hottentot." With undisguised satisfaction, he tosses out the worst insult: "those who in general termed themselves Christians, [are] not so honest nor so good in their morals as the Turks."

To see Equiano's spiritual regeneration as a purely rhetorical strategy, however, would be to misread the temper of the man and his times. Religion is an animating vision of life, not a dull habit born of convention or a pose for reformist convenience. Perhaps understandably for a man buffeted by *deus ex machina* all his life, Equiano came to embrace the stern predestinarianism of John Calvin. With the best thinkers of his age, he wrestled with the harsh paradox at the core of hardcore Protestantism, the theological conundrum embodied in Calvin's notion of the "covenant of grace." If God's grace is unconditional and bestowed upon an elect few in a predetermined judgment, then man has no role in his own fate, no true choice in his salvation or damnation, no free will. The decision to perform good works, the outward evidence of sanctification on earth, may mean nothing to heaven. How then can man know he is saved? For Equiano, a Damascus moment of revelation

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resolves the dilemma in an ineffable "born again" experience. The only known portrait of the author, an engraving that served as a frontispiece to the early editions of the *Interesting Narrative*, depicts the moment of rapture: Equiano holding a Bible, opened to the pages of Acts Chapter IV, Verse 12: "Salvation is by Christ alone." A sanctified believer, Equiano experiences life as a cosmic drama, a stage where every detail is invested with salvific significance and transcendent meaning.

Not that a belief in a Calvinist God let the individual off the hook. Giving God the credit while working like the devil, he is tireless for his own and his people's betterment. From within the straightjacket of a determinist theology, he manages to negotiate room to move for his unceasing efforts to escape slavery—even if the language tends to break down in contradiction. "If it were God's will I ever should be freed it would be so, and, on the contrary, if it was not His will it would not happen," says the fatalist before gainsaying himself: "I could only hope and trust in the God of Heaven; and at that instant my mind was big with inventions and full of schemes to escape." In God he trusts—but in himself as well.

For Americans, this side of Equiano is apt to strike a familiar chord. His professions of total dependence on Providence coexist with an utter reliance on the individual will. As much as a disciple of John Calvin, he is one of the first apostles of the self-made man, not so much a representative figure in the movement from Puritan to Yankee but Puritan *and* Yankee. Casting himself in the mold of upward mobility and willful self-improvement, Equiano resembles no one so much as his more famous and fortunate contemporary, Benjamin Franklin—resourceful, pragmatic, print-oriented, always on the lookout for a likely scam or fast buck. Like Franklin, Equiano is thoroughly acquisitive and possesses an almost supernatural faith in the written word. "I therefore embraced every occasion of improvement; and every new thing that I observed I treasured up in my memory," he writes in an echo of the other *Autobiography*. "I had long wished to be able to read and write; and for this purpose I took every opportunity to gain instruction. . . ." An odd synchronicity links the lives of the two men, writing autobiographies in the same year, who twenty years earlier may have passed each other on the streets of Philadelphia.

The tragedy of Equiano's life—and America in the eighteenth century—is that unlike Franklin, Equiano is forbidden full admission into his new world. At times he wants desperately to belong. "I not only felt myself quite easy with these new countrymen, but relished their society and manners," he admits. "I no longer looked upon them as spirits but as men superior to us; and therefore I had the stronger desire to resemble them, to imbibe their spirit, and imitate their manners." Though he celebrates his African roots, he is a marginal man who cannot but admire the science and literature of the Christian West, a culture that has been at once his spiritual salvation and earthly purga-

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tory. Yet no matter how useful or intelligent or Christian he makes himself, race excludes him from the American dream.

The equivocation of the subtitle—the hated slave moniker "Gustavus Vassa" in tandem with the defiant assertion "the African"—bespeaks the duality in his character. In the opening chapter, recalling his African boyhood, his very language is conflicted. Shifting narrative guises, he alternates between the tone of the sophisticated English traveller instructing his fellow Europeans about an exotic people, and the voice of the African tribesman, proud and committed, sharing again in his race's victories, longing for the lost world. The balance of literary evidence holds the account to be derivative and inauthentic, less a rose-colored memory of a prelapsarian Africa than a cut-and-paste compilation of observations culled from contemporary travel books. In one culturally schizophrenic passage, he trips over his pronouns, stumbling from the first to third-person possessive in the very same sentence. Significantly, he is describing slaves, them and us, thee and me: "With us they do no more work than other members of the community, even their masters; their food, clothing, and lodging were nearly the same as theirs."

The identity confusion about who he is never extends to what he is about: to abolish African slavery and defy European racism. In bringing the abolitionist word to the infidels, Equiano used whatever argument was at hand—appeals to reason, calls to Christian conscience, and promises of mercantile profit. His white reformist audience is ever uppermost in mind and he was not above flattering his Anglo-Protestant readers with a dollop of anti-Catholicism. But no matter the tactic, the campaign against slavery called for a double-barreled strategy targeting *both* the institution and the ideology, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-European racism that upheld it. In a closed, self-sustaining circle, slavery fostered the inferiority that in turn justified slavery.

By 1789, though, the closed circle was being punctured by declarations of human equality and other self-evident truths. The promise of the Age of Enlightenment and the American Revolution, the seeds of liberation embedded in the thinking of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, prepared the ground for the *Interesting Narrative*—and the narrative itself enriched the soil. Published the same year as Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* and the outbreak of the French Revolution, the *Interesting Narrative* is infused with the philosophy of its time. Slavery, proclaims Equiano in a Jeffersonian flourish, "violates that first natural right of mankind, equality, and independency; and gives one man a dominion over his fellows which God could never intend!" Conversely, Jefferson's rhetoric against George III in 1776 sounds like Equiano in full dudgeon: "He has waged a cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemi-

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sphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation hither." Though deleted from the final draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson's words were being uttered, and printed, by a small but growing body of men and women appalled at the sheer human cruelty of the system and the logical inconsistency of a philosophy of natural rights that did not include all humans by nature.

Both a spur to sentiment against the slave trade and a result of it, the *Interesting Narrative* emerged in a context of rising opposition to slavery in enlightened circles of the British intelligentsia. Member of Parliament William Wilberforce and agitators Granville Sharpe and Thomas Clarkson set examples and rhetorical justification. Fashionable ladies wore a cameo stamped with the figure of a chained African supplicating, "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" Ultimately, their cumulative efforts compelled the British Parliament to outlaw the slave trade in 1807.

In what Equiano called "the American quarter of the globe" his impact was less formidable. So well-timed for Britain, the *Interesting Narrative* missed its historical moment in America. The work asserted full humanity for the black man at the very juncture in which the Founding Fathers were cutting a deal that defined slaves as three-fifths of a (white) man in the U.S. Constitution. The next half-century saw the consolidation and extension of chattel slavery throughout the American south, a system Enlightened Americans of the 1780s thought destined for decline, prospering with the plantation economy of king cotton and the philosophy of white supremacy.

When American-born anti-slavery sentiment began to percolate in the 1820s and 1830s, Equiano was, briefly, rediscovered. An 1829 American abridgement for children, edited by Abigail Mott, and an 1837 edition published by Issac Knapp, the great anti-slavery activist who with William Lloyd Garrison published the crusading weekly, *The Liberator*, re-introduced the work to another generation of abolitionists. It circulated widely among the select group that grew to encompass the nation. As a sterling example of an intelligent and pious African, Equiano would seem to have been an exemplary model for abolitionist exploitation in America. Yet the slave's narrative was of limited political impact if he could not testify and support it at public lectures and abolitionist rallies, if crowds could not behold the man behind the text.

Besides, Equiano's tale is too idiosyncratic and dynamic to be wedged into a purely abolitionist mold. For American reformers fighting a home grown slave system shackling native born Americans, Equiano's African roots, freedom of movement, and international outlook were too remote in time, space, and experience. Equiano barely knew the "peculiar institution," the plantation system either in the house or the field, whose image has dominated the American imagination of slavery from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* through Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. Moreover, the work

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lacks the stock elements of Southern antebellum slave narratives: the theatrical confrontations with cruel overseers, the anguish of kith and kin being "sold down the river," and the despicable villains whose lash and lust stirred impulses that were not always edifying. The trajectory of the American slave follows the North Star and runs a thousand miles to freedom through canebrakes and underground railroads. Equiano's tale is not so schematic, never between just two points on a compass. Even as a slave, he was ill-cast for the role of victim—too talented to inspire condescension, too lucky to be lamented, too mobile to pin down. Heartbreak aplenty there is—torn from his beloved sister in childhood, beaten to a pulp in the West Indies, shattered by the death of his noble boyhood friend, Richard Baker. Yet seldom does he seek to inspire the easiest of emotions, pity. In tabulating the depredations of slavery Equiano seems almost reticent, as if embarrassed by the capacity of his fellow man for stone cold malice. Born in Africa, having spent his childhood nourished by tribal culture, he absorbed a sense of self worth before skin color was the mark of Cain and the sign of inferiority.

After 1865, with the questions of the moment resolved—the British Parliament having outlawed the slave trade in 1807, the Civil War having settled the issue of chattel slavery—attention to the *Interesting Narrative* waned on both sides of the Atlantic for nearly a century. Though Equiano's tale insinuated itself into the popular memory of slavery, the name of the original source went unrecorded—except in abridged form, as a work of children's literature, where it maintained a steady presence, with woodcuts for the nineteenth century, colorful illustrations for the twentieth. A class of readers subject to the caprice of almighty and sporadically cruel overlords may have felt a special kinship with the eleven-year-old spirited away in the grimmest of fairy tales. Only with the rediscovery of things African in the 1960s and the pioneering work of British literary historian Paul Edwards was Equiano's story rescued from obscurity. In 1989, a minor revival of interest in the *Interesting Narrative* spurred two bicentennial editions.

To the Africa of his memory, the people of his childhood, Olaudah Equiano never returned. One can almost be grateful he didn't. Forty years of wandering among western civilization would likely have rendered him unfit for reimmersion into the currents of tribal Africa. Poised between two worlds and two races, he would ever be an exile from both, another of the great eighteenth-century wanderers, shipwrecked in a strange land and afflicted by ill-tempered natives. In a haunting image, he powders his face white one night in order to walk unmolested through the streets of London, among the savages he once feared would eat him alive, who had in their way consumed him.

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POEMS

TINO VILLANUEVA

AT THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM: WASHINGTON D. C.

I - *Before Our Eyes*

We've had it told to us before;
we've seen annihilation, *Vernichtung*
at the movie house in town.
Videos reveal the same declensions of rage,
speech acts crowds shall act upon—
no principles governing reflection,
words shattering glass, building up the
circumstances of the fire,
the same conclusion mortality demands.

Now before our eyes: how darkly different
when a deep terrain of text persists with artifacts;
and photographs, each one a cell of time made real.
We turn, and make our way on cobblestones
pounded out from Mauthausen,
and through a freight car walk along once more,
fitting facts in place—:
what led up to what; how a people lived
keeping at their tasks which came to be their lives
with the etched impression of their
history taking place,
until one day: were seized
and carted off in trains like perishable goods
squeezed into the mind-dark of enclosure,
breath coming hard.

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Great god,
what geography of pain we are walking through.
What a season of convincing clouds that
hang like smoke, as when the soul,
unassailable,
has found release through manumission.
And what indecent will of those who
saw no cause to care, foreshadowing, therefore,
the concentric rush of time running out.

This is fact: the harsh articulation
of someone's life that, in the end,
will end too soon.

II - *The Freight Car*

We move on, affirming the proximity of everything,
eyes breaking open to the light: installations here,
photographs and objects there, the visual details of
time-kept dying. Suddenly: an intractable fragment
of truth—a freight car brought, finally, to a halt

on the same illicit logic of rails. No stench now;
human grime gone, washed away by water and soap
and the varnish of time. Still it affronts: the tight
seal of steel and wood, a prisonhouse suffocatingly
small, non-sequent, disconnected from the event.

If steel and scarred wood could recount their story
from memory, could beg forgiveness or bring back
the dead, then my hand might not flinch at their
touch as I enter, enter the past: One evening
a cantor was singing before a full congregation,

true worship known by heart. Peacefulness in
the infinite, and the lightness of candlelight
breathlessly still when: a muster of men from a
shadow realm broke forth, cutting off the prayer.
Cantor, families and friends by the thousands,

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hundreds of thousands, were led to the station,
rabid soldiers barking out orders, firing pistols
in the air, dogs bringing up the right flank. So
many helpless immortals so far from their dwelling,

clutching their garments, huddled like the bundles
they carried, unable to run away from their names.
To think they leaned where I'm standing, squatted
or kneeled, dark-stricken, their children driven
to tantrums; or stood where they could against

steel-dug-into-wood, no heaven above them, no earth
below. Some in their places fell mute, were confused,
riddled with fright when the train screeched, jolted
forth, shimmied and swayed and pulled out. Others
kept faith, and for them the summit of sky remained

whole; still others felt death beginning to sink
into them—everyone drawing a breath: breath in,
breath out, holding their breath, sighing, inhaling-
exhaling full breaths, half-breaths, gasping with
all complexities of thirst. Long after Treblinka,

"Water," I hear them cry. "Water, air." I step
out, looking back as I move away with the crowd.
One freight car at a standstill, uncoupled from its
long concatenation of steel dissolved into this
artifact: the summation of all that advances no more.

III - *The Photographs*

To look
into devastated eyes is not enough; to touch
the photographs is not enough.
Even if their breath could reach me,
I could utter nothing among the ruins
written with light.
But someone such as I, a nobody in all of this,
has come to see (this much the heart allows):
what man has done to man, human acts of the profane,
and the defeated countryside.

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Led to camps
by the uniform substance of hate,
one by one they held
still enough to be caught in the strict regulation
of natural or flat light. I read it in their eyes:
reluctance seeking its own landscape
with so much night to come. To myself I say:
this face, or that face had a name:
Joseph, Daniel, or *Hannah,*
but oh, you are a number—
sharp alchemy scored on skin.
I pray your soul remained intact until the end.

(Print after print: I am carried away by destruction
exhausted into fact, forgetting
the persecuted who escaped; who from the
edges of the battlefield were saved, here by a
timely neighbor, a benevolent baker; there by a
factory owner, a farmer, or by decent Catholic nuns
—reflexive acts of the unsung.)

Then there was Ejszyszki (A-shish-key), 1941:
a village of 4,000 that could not find the
doors to exodus—slaughtered in two days.
I touch the photographs of how it was
before it ended, in a great field of darkness...
and my body shrieks.
Five decades, and in another country,
I am too late as in a blazing nightmare
where I reach out,
but cannot save you, cannot save you.
Sarah, Rachel, Benjamin, in this light you have risen,
where the past is construed as present.
For all that is in me: Let the dead go on living,
let these words become human.

I am your memory now.

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MICHAEL BENEDIKT

THE KAPOS;
OR, ARNOLDT AND LILI MORGENSTERN

(Nazi Germany, 1938)

Kapo: A Jewish prisoner in one of the many infamous Nazi concentration camps who was, for one reason or another, given "special privileges"—including at first (before the nature of those camps became clear to outsiders) the recruiting of new prisoners (or "guests" as they were called) on a temporary, so-called "trial basis"—Dictionary of World War II

And so the Kapos came to our little town, let out around dinnertime

With some soldiers, from that crazy Nazi camp; & they rounded us up,
promising that we two could be Kapos, too,
In those first "Gray Announcements" which they'd printed to hand out
—If we rendered ourselves up to join them, for even just a
"trial visit," & "At Once, Early, and Without a Fight"

—For otherwise, just as sure as we were born, they said,
late some night, maybe even close to midnight,
The muffled roar of convoy trucks would come
When we weren't dressed, & it was inconvenient

—& My husband, Arnoldt, then took me aside, & told me in a whisper,
that yes, surrendering for a "trial visit" was a damn sight
Better, than being awoken late one night, looking into a muzzle
or a gunsight; or worse yet, maybe being hunted down
when we had both just bedded down
—Hiding maybe, terrified, in our basement behind the wine-rack, in that
old broken bathtub

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Which for so many months now I'd thanked Jahweh *yes Jahweh Himself,*
that no one else had yet found!

No, not even our next-door neighbor's children who—when we two
weren't around; & they came back from their monastery school,
or their butterfly hunt that fled through the fields,
so close to that camp, every afternoon, every single afternoon—
Used to make a "game" of opening our cellar door, & then searching
thereabouts with their flashlights, at twilights
With their puppy dog, "Fritze"; & sometimes, too, with our other
dear neighbors' dogs & children...

...And so, suddenly, there was a commotion of motorcycles stopping,

& Arnoldt & I laughing, with that poor old broken bathtub
far, ever so far, far behind us
& We two (in two Kapo sidecars) carrying two light packages

Containing two toothbrushes, two combs, & two brand new sets of pajamas,
one hairbrush & also one fine nightgown
Plus one bottle of good Moselle we'd gaily taken, all for our overnight stay,
"Experimentally" as we planned it (for truly it just *had* to be experimentally)
—For just as Arnoldt said, to get us to come to Camp that way, & to
give up & go there so easily
It was clear that they just *had* to agree!

—And besides that, there were two gift packets of cigarettes which,
as those two Kapo drivers themselves pointed out,
Had been given to us so generously...

—& Yet it's also true that just as soon as Arnoldt had marched upstairs
to get me that very first night, with that very first copy
He said they'd said, of the "Gray Announcements" to be given out

(With Arnoldt holding it in his *teeth*, & with Arnoldt also holding up
both arms as if in surrender before me, as if for a joke & with
a loud laugh

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Then pointing with one hand through a window downstairs to two
other figures crouching beside two racing bicycles—
Two more Nazi soldiers who had suddenly appeared & who were taking
a newspaper "Propaganda Photograph")

—Oh yes it's also true that even that very first bright sudden
flashbulb hurt my eyes
Like a burning gas explosion; why oh yes why for the sake of Jahweh,
why did those Kapos have to do all that then, for it wasn't
yet quite midnight

—Yes it was just after dinnertime I remember & yet our light
was already out.

JAMES HATCH

Würzburg, 1944

Each time I wake, that bloody skull is screaming
In the wall. The bridge's last arch is sprung;
Airing white bedclothes out the windows
Is forbidden. The straight-backed cattle
Herd in the streets; they bunch between rubble-hills
And their forests of stiff little swastika flags.
Who will stop the leaders from lighting
Their last pyres in this flown life? Today
We caught a deserter, put him on trial:
His belt had been taken, his pants kept falling. . . .
Our priest wants to take the old crucifix
Whose arms and spiny hands stretch out
Towards us, off the wall to hide.—On my knees, I see
Only your knees, and your punctured feet.

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JOHN PECK

Ordo Novum

They come in slowly,
rules
for the new way of life,
sift gradually

across the task,
first-snow
ghostly though myriad
past glass by the desk,

they spell out their
provisions
persistently, slanting them
through years, through air.

Until once, there,
bent over
words beginning *w*,
I snagged on *war*,

wife and *woman*
then
widower wanderer wait
all in the human

wink of slippage,
then
wisdom the balancer,
and made rummage

through the white thousands
dusky
beyond my window and tallied
one of the new ends,

its regimen:
each day
to experience dawn once
but also again.

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MIKLÓS RADNÓTI

Fragment

I lived upon this earth in such an age
when man had grown so ferocious
he killed for pleasure, not just on command,
believing lies and foaming with mistaken strife:
wild obsessions curled around his life.

I lived upon this earth in such an age
when to betray was virtuous and the murderer,
the traitor and the robber were the hero—
and the one perhaps mute and slow for the cause,
already they loathed him, like the diseased.

I lived upon this earth in such an age
when those who raised their voices had to hide,
had to bite their fists in shame,—
the country went berserk and bared its teeth
at horrible destiny, drunk from blood and filth.

I lived upon this earth in such an age
when the mother's child became a curse
and a woman was happy if she miscarried,
the living envied the spoiling grave-dead,
while on the table thick poison bubbled.

I lived upon this earth in such an age
when even the poet could only fall silent
and wait, hoping judgment would sound again—
because none could say worthy curses anyway,
except the scholar of terrible words, Isaiah.

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Razglednicas

1.

From broad Bulgaria, while the roll of cannon blasts
pounds the mountain range, then hesitates and is lost,
men, animals, farm wagons and thoughts are piled high,
the neighing road startled, the maned sky running wild.
You are perpetual in me and this propelling turmoil.
Deep in my consciousness you shine forever immobile
and silent, as the angel when it wonders at destruction,
or a beetle, burrowed in the hollow of a brittle tree.

August 30, 1944
In the mountains

2.

Nine kilometers from here the haystacks
are burning and the dwellings drop,
and lingering at the meadows' edge, silent
frightened peasants smoke their pipes.
But here the water still ripples—a tiny
shepherd girl steps into the pond
and her wavy flock of sheep dips toward
the water to drink the clouds.

October 6, 1944
Cservenka

3.

Blood-thick saliva flows from the oxen mouths,
and all the people are pissing blood.
My reeking regiment, a wild-knotted writhing.
Above us blows abominable death.

October 24, 1944
Mohács

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4.

Collapsing beside him, I turned his body over
and already it was stiff, like a string about to snap.
Shot in the nape. "And so you'll end up too"
I whisper to myself. "Just lie still." Rising up
from patience death blossoms in the open air.
Der springt noch auf sounds above me.
Mud mixed with blood was drying on my ear.

October 31, 1944
Szentkiralyszabadja

Translated from the Hungarian by Brett Foster and Erika Szívós

H.N. BIALIK

City of the Killings

Rise and go to the town of the killings and you'll come to the yards
and with your eyes and your own hand feel the fence
and on the trees and on the stones and plaster of the walls
the congealed blood and hardened brains of the dead.
And you'll come from there to the ruins and stop before the rents
and pass by the pierced walls and shattered ovens,
where the axe's head bit deep, to burst and deepen holes,
baring the black stone and shears of brick all burned
and they'll look like the open mouths of black and mortal wounds
that have no remedy, that have no cure,
and your feet will sink in feathers and stumble over heaps
of the fragments of fragments and smithereens of smithereens and
defeat of books and scrolls,
the annihilation of divine labor and fruit of working like a dog;
and you will not stand by the carnage but pass by there
on your path—
and the rye blooms before you and pours perfume in your nose,

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and in your spite and against your wish you'll bring their strange incense
like the tender spring to your heart—and it will not be loathsome to it;
and with a multitude of golden arrows the sun will pierce your liver
and seven rays from every grain of glass will dance in your torture.
For the Lord called the Spring and the slaughterer together:
the sun rose, rye bloomed and the slaughterer slaughtered.
And you'll flee and come to a yard, and this yard will have a heap in it—
and on this heap they'll have beheaded two—a Jew and his dog.
One axe did for them both and in one heap they were thrown
and in the mixed blood of both—pigs will snuffle and roll;
tomorrow a rain will come down, and sweep it to one of the
wasteland streams
and blood will no longer scream from the gutters and from the garbage pails
for it will be lost in the deep or water and feed the thorns—
and all will be as nothing, all go back to as if it never were.
And to the attics of the roofs you'll climb and stand there in the darkness
while bitter fear of death still gnaws in lightless quiet;
and from all the dark holes and from the shadows in vents
eyes, see them, eyes silently watch.
Ghosts of the "martyred" they are, bent and desolate
to one corner under a roof they are crammed—and they keep silent...
Here the axe found them and to this place they come
to stamp here the look of their eyes in that last moment,
all the sorrow of their pointless death and all the curse of their lives
and they cling here together, trembling and terrified, and from where
they hide
silently raise their eyes to protest their disgrace and ask: why?
And who else is like God on earth and can bear this in silence?
And you raise your eyes to the roof, and its eaves too keep quiet—
they're darkening over you and keeping mum, and you ask the spiders:
they are living witness, on the scene, they'll tell you all the facts:
the case of a disembowelled chest filled with feathers,
the case of nostrils and nine inch nails and skulls and hammers,
the case of slaughtered human beings hung up from beams like fish
and the case of a baby found by the side of his stabbed mother
still dozing with her cold nipple in his sucking mouth;
and the case of a child who was quartered and gave up the ghost
with the word "Mamma!"—
and his eyes too are here, calling me to account.
And more like these and of these the spider tells
things that poke holes in the brain and are enough to kill
your spirit and your soul to an eternal death—

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and you refrain and stifle in your throat the scream and bury it
in the depths of your heart before it breaks
and you leap from there and go out—and here the earth's as it is every day,
and the sun like the day before yesterday throws its light to the earth.

Translated from the Hebrew by Atar Hadari

L. S. ASEKOFF

Brother, Crow

for Eamon Grennan

You have heard that battlecry that is
shrill mockery of itself, &
in aftershock of silence looked up to see,
shattering a sky, blueblack bleakness
of their lofty fall,
dark wings.
Come to earth
this Sunday morning by the doorstep
where you stand, iced branches of forsythia
in your hands, how they lord it over
all this whiteness – bootblack braggadocios
dragging haggard shadows cross the snow
as though to say, *All conquering Sun,*
after your kingdom come vassels of the crow,
the hangman & the undertakers.
Older than mortality,
moon-silvered cinders of the brightest star
fix you in chill gleaming. Banquo's
ghost? Pale scarecrow? No,
only one who suffers from "the fatal spell."
As those who turn their backs on sleep
wake to the nightmare at the gate
you watch the great in-gathering wings
of the Sabbath flock
clamoring, congregate upon the chosen spot.
Blue-carbon beaks poking peck
the frozen rose.

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Like a man who eats
from the shallow dish of his own skull
black starlight of his brain,
you stare & stare & stare,
paralyzed by what you cannot help
but see—that dark keyhole to
the castle of the crow
only deeper darkness illuminates,
then—brief candle shivering
in the wind, breath of the Ice Age—turning,
shut the door.
Back inside, above the fire, place
in vase of warm water melting boughs
promised soon to spring,
"flurry of yellow flowers"—the gold dream.

TED HUGHES

Tiresias

One time, Jupiter, happy to be idle,
Swept the cosmic mystery aside
And draining another goblet of ambrosia
Teased Juno, who drowsed in bliss beside him:
"This love of male and female's a strange business.
Fifty-fifty investment in the madness,
Yet she ends up with nine-tenths of the pleasure."

Juno's answer was: "A man might think so.
It needs more than a mushroom in your cup
To wake a wisdom that can fathom which
Enjoys the deeper pleasure, man or woman.
It needs the solid knowledge of a soul
Who having lived and loved in woman's body
Has also lived and loved in the body of a man."

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Jupiter laughed aloud: "We have the answer.
There is a fellow called Tiresias.
Strolling to watch the birds and hear the bees
He came across two serpents copulating.
He took the opportunity to kill
Both with a single blow, but merely hurt them—
And found himself transformed into a woman.

"After the seventh year of womanhood,
Strolling to ponder on what women ponder
She saw in that same place the same two serpents
Knotted as before in copulation.
'If your pain can still change your attacker
Just as you once changed me, then change me back.'
She hit the couple with a handy stick,

"And there he stood as male as any man."
"He'll explain," cried Juno, "why you are
Slave to your irresistible addiction
While the poor nymphs you force to share it with you
Do all they can to shun it." Jupiter
Asked Tiresias. "In their act of love
Who takes the greater pleasure, man or woman?"

"Woman," replied Tiresias, "takes nine-tenths."
Juno was so angry—angrier
Than is easily understandable—
She struck Tiresias and blinded him.
"You've seen your last pretty snake, forever."
But Jove consoled him: "That same blow," he said,
"Has opened your inner eye, like a nightscope. See:

"The secrets of the future—they are yours."

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MARIANNE MOORE

Letters

For most of her life, the poet Marianne Moore wrote letters daily. They ranged from short notes to highly-detailed descriptions of thirty-five pages or longer. Many of her longest letters were written to family members; her family was intensely close and used a variety of animal names and other playful names to refer to themselves. The letters selected here are addressed to her brother, John Warner Moore, who was a chaplain in the U.S. Navy and later at a boy's preparatory school. He is addressed as "Winks" and "Badger;" Moore signs the letters "Rat," (a name taken from The Wind in the Willows) *"Weaz," and "Winks." In the first letter, Moore refers to the Aldingtons, who were the poet H.D. and her husband, Richard Aldington; and Dora Marsden, who began* Freewoman: A Weekly Feminist Review *in 1911, the name of which was later changed to* The Egoist. *"Mole" is Mary Warner Moore, the poet's mother; Edwin Howard was an architect and a close personal friend of the Moores.*

October 10, 1915

Dear Winks,

Moley beats me this I know,
for my spare ribs tell me so.

Mole is not a little condemnatory of me because I exerted myself so, to prepare for the lady who is visiting Mrs. Glass and who knows the Aldingtons—Miss Rhodes. We suggested last week that she and Mrs. Glass come to tea today at 2 as they had to get home at 4 to receive the children from school. Miss Rhodes came alone saying Mrs. Glass had had to go to Harrisburg. She is a perfectly delightful lady, rather tall with gray hair and she wore a lovely hat black velvet with gray silk bows or rather ribbon side wing effects. She told me all about my confederates. Said Mrs. Aldington [H.D.] kept her house spotless and that Mr. Aldington has dispensed with

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a hat, that the Whitalls had two houses one in town and one in the country and that their father had made a prodigious pile of money, in the cement business, that James Whitall was writing a novel superintended by George Moore, that John Cournos was poor as poor but very interesting, growing daily more so, that Mr. Plank was asked at a very regal dinner one time, where there were a lot of the aristocracy, how he came to start on his career and he told them with great gusto that he had been born "in jail" (his father was a sheriff) and how he had sold mackerel and washed windows, and they assured him that such a thing could never have happened in England. I learned also, to my great satisfaction, that Dora Marsden whom I abominate, and who contributes to *The Egoist*, pays for a front page every month, on which to air her views about Truth and Reality and that if it weren't for her financial support, *The Egoist* couldn't exist.

To my disgust I learn that Yeats has interested himself in spiritualism and is busying himself about that to the exclusion of everything else. Miss Rhodes deplored the fact that such a cheap brainless fakirism should have secured a toehold on him. Ask Mole when she got her little bull, Bealnambo?

Yesterday I dispatched my second installment of Missionary moneys and I suppose I have escaped jail by a miracle, the second time also.

I have received a peacock from Edwin [Howard], a large Japanese print of bird on tree with gold tail—very beautiful; it is an old master I think Hokusai, or some such.

I patterned after you and walked home with Miss Rhodes as I was lending her some books and magazines. It will be a pretty intrepid fellow that will buzz around Rat, now to annoy him; freshened up as he is, and full of life.

With love, Rat

During a visit to New York with Hall Cowdray and her family, Moore met Zaroubi Himurjian, an architect and painter and close friend of Alfred Steiglitz's—the "expedition" she refers to here. J.B. Kerfoot was the literary editor of Life *and associate editor of* Camera Work*; Horace Holley was the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. Blackwells Island was an insane asylum located in New York City. F.S. Flint was a British poet and translator, and the editor of the* Imagist Anthology.

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December 12, 1915

Dear Badger,

Yesterday from 10–12:30 Mr. Norcross, Florence's brother, paid tribute to us, and the day before from 10 to one. Mole says while anyone wants anything of us we "*dare*" not be too tired to give it.

I'll have to tell you about the expedition in installments. I suppose Mole told you that I had met J.B. Kerfoot. Wednesday morning I went to "291" to see as I thought, some of Alfred Stieglitz's photography. He had an exhibition up of [Oscar] Bluemner, a modern architect. Mr. Stieglitz was exceedingly unemotional, and friendly and finally after telling me how he was hated, said I might come back and look at some of the things standing with their faces to the wall in a back room. I enjoyed them. He has a magnificent little thing of the sea in dark blue and some paintings of mountains by a man named [Marsden] Hartley, also some Picabias and Picassos and so on. He told me to come back and he would show me some other things. I stopped at the Modern Gall. on my way home to see some Van Goghs and some of Mr. Stieglitz's magazines and at one I got back to the Training School. Zaroubi Himurjian took us for luncheon to a Turkish restaurant, the Constantinople. We had soup and pieces of meat roasted on skewers and meat fried in grapeleaves and rice and pastry and ice cream. We then saw some ancient Chinese rugs at an Armenian wholesale rug place and an importer there took us to see the processes of silk making. The demonstrator was a "parvenue" as Zaroubi said who buzzed on about reels and filatures and dyevats punctuating his story with asides to his stenographer. Finally he said, "Minnie is my taxi waiting?" "I have a luncheon engagement at the Astor House for 12 o'clock and I'm now half an hour late but might as well complete the story. This is the last process." Finally he took his coat and stick and hat and sailed off telling the stenographer, that if anyone wanted him, he would be in "*the palm room.*" Zaroubi said, "Oh the intellectual dude! And his taxi was not there!" And it wasn't. We then paid a visit to the brass shop near Allen Street and saw Brides and Grooms in the windows and got back just after 4. Alfred Kreymborg was waiting for me, by appointment and I never was so surprised to see anyone. He is middle height, quiet, dignified, dry, unpuffed up, very deliberate and kind; he was dressed in [a] black suit with the suspicion of a white check in it like your 1913 suit you got at Kronenberg's and was wearing a new pair of shoes, very plain and rather fashionable, nothing deluxe. I asked him if he had expected to have a meeting of the people he spoke about in his letter and he said he would like to but couldn't be sure. He was just up, had been sick for some time and so had Mrs. Kreymborg but that there were a good

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many out of town people in town. I told him I had seen his *Studies in Love and Life [Love and Life and Other Studies]* and his article on Duchamp in *The Transcript*. He nearly sank down in a fit, when I spoke of *Studies of Love and Life*! He said, I feel as if I ought to go home. Those are worthless things I did them when I was 18. I hate to think there are any of them about etc. Where do you see them? etc. He also deprecated *The Transcript* article and said, "It was very tired, it dragged towards the end but I couldn't do any better so I let it go." He then explained how the pictures of Duchamp and some other celebrity had been mixed and how *The Transcript* sassed him for objecting to the slip till Duchamp himself remonstrated. He gave me the back numbers of *Others* and told me about half a dozen people in N.Y. said he "couldn't live with him" when I asked him what Floyd Dell was like, said Duchamp was a lovely fellow and Alanson Hartpence. Said he knew Horace Holley and Mr. Kerfoot and Mr. Stieglitz. He said, "did you tell Mr. Stieglitz you knew me?" I said "no, I didn't know he knew Mr. Kerfoot or you or any of the men who are interested in poetry." He then said how good Mr. Stieglitz had been to him, and given him things and how he (A.K.) had printed Mr. Kerfoot's criticism of *Others* in the November number and so forth. He then said the madame and he wanted me to come to dinner some time. He said, "I have to go round to the studio of a man who lives near here, Mr. [Adolf] Wolff's, perhaps you have seen his poems—he has been at Blackwells Island for a while and has just come out. What plans have you for tonight? Could you come round with me for a moment to his studio and then go on to the house for supper? We have nothing prepared but I can go out and get a few chops. I am sure you wouldn't be intruding at Mr. Wolff's. We have nothing private to talk over and I won't be there long." "Mr. Wolff," he said "is changed in a great many ways since being on Blackwells Island and he has put lots of what he saw, into his poems. Here is one." He read a poem on identification and another about men carrying buckets, bent like patriarchs and so on. I said I would ask Hall if it would be convenient for me to go home with him. "But" I said, "if you have been sick perhaps I'd better not go. Suppose I come another time." "Not at all" he said, "we want you and it's not a party it's just us," and so forth. Hall was loath to consent but I got assent after introducing Alfred to her. On the way to Mr. Wolff's, Alfred said, "Are you often here?" I said, "no this [is] the first time, to go round by myself. I have been through New York on the way to other places and my brother used to be here or near here teaching and he took me round once to make a call but I didn't know where I was." "You have never been to N. York before!" Alfred could hardly take in the enormity of it. He said "I'd like to see your brother when he comes. You say he's often here? Send anyone round. Remember we want your brother when he comes to town, etc." At

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last we arrived at the Studio on Madison Ave. Alfred said "I'm afraid Adolf lives in a palace." We then moved a house or two further on. "This is almost as bad" he said "but this is the place." We went up four flights of a spic and span apartment and "Adolf" appeared in a blouse I think but I can't be sure, leaning over the banisters. He greeted me when introduced very limply, in a harmless casual way and said we could not come into the apartment proper as the floor was not dry enough to walk on. It has just been stained I think but it was a gorgeous place in point of situation and atmosphere, (it was a front room). There was nothing in it, but 2 pictures on the wall, a modern oil in rather deep colors of a German street and a small thing I didn't notice. We were shown into the studio on the opposite side of the passage, also front. It was full of plaster statues the best things I have seen for a long time and the only things of their kind, done all, in right angles—they are full of drollery and wit however and some were very powerful. One I liked particularly of a mother holding two children—the first child sitting on the mother's lap with his feet straight out in front of him and the second child sitting on the first, in the same position. [MM sketches the statue.] He also had a cat that I liked. Mr. Wolff himself is stout, moderately genial, naïve, and dry with black hair and beard. Alfred said, "Adolf your poems have made a hit with the highbrows, they're all quoting you." "*Is* it posseebal?" Mr. Wolff said unconcernedly but genially. Afterwhile we left and he said, "Miss Moore: Come and see me."

The Kreymborgs live at 29 Bank Street, Greenwich Village. You take the Madison Ave. car to 14th St.—that is Madison Ave. runs into 14th, change at 14th and go along 14th to 8th Avenue. Then get out and walk: turn to the left and then to the right in a sort of zig zag (anyone there knows where Bank Street is). Alfred pointed out the old fashioned houses and it took about 2 minutes to get to his own. He opened the door and said, "I've brought Miss Moore." Whereupon "Mrs. Kreymborg" advanced with the most glowing expression and said "I'm so glad, give me your coat. Alfred you help Miss Moore to take her things off. Put them here. Supper's almost ready. I am so sorry Mrs. Kreymborg isn't here but she'll be back any moment." We smiled and Alfred led me round the room slowly showing me things. The room is large, the walls are pale yellow and nothing is "extravagant." A small kitchenette opens from the room with folding doors which they keep open as the kitchen is an enlarged cupboard the width of the room. In one corner of the living room next to the far end of the kitchen is a round fumed oak table on which we ate and framing the corner is a book case full of the things we have, the Brownings in lamb skin and Tennyson and Shelley and against the other side of the kitchen partition is another book case with some larger sets, Turgenev,

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Molière etc. An old fashioned white fire place, which is closed up is in the middle of the room opposite the doors from the hall, (with the small classics as noted, on the right,) and a desk and old Remington typewriter on the left. Over the desk (which is a table) is a magnificent photograph of Whitman with autographs and on the street wall between the windows is an enormous full length gilt mirror. Against the hall wall, (opposite the fireplace bookcase and Whitman) is a wide, low couch covered with pillows and one cute little orange velvet one and there is a painting on that wall of a girl in green dress against a dull yellow background framed in a heavy gilt, regulation oil painting frame. They have a few chairs—one wicker I think and some straight ones. Presently they gave me [a] towel and told me "the first room at the top of the stairs on the right" and after I came down Alfred went up and presently we sat down to supper. (When we had first come in, Alfred had said he would go out for some chops but I prevented him and as it turned out they are on a vegetable diet and can't eat meat for a while, or anything but chicken.) We had potatoes and lima beans and salsify and carrots I think, beautifully cooked and applesauce and bread [and] jam. They gave me six times more than I could eat. They have pretty china with a small red and green design on it, and silver spoons like ours and pepper in the pot and paper napkins and a dish of fruit. I said, while Alfred was out, "It is such a pleasure to know you and Mr. Kreymborg and to be here but I am afraid it will tire you to have me since you have both been sick." "Not a bit," Mrs. Kreymborg said, "Don't you think of it. We're enjoying it so." A.K. came in at [that] moment and I said, "I was just telling Mrs. Kreymborg that it is a great delight to know you both and find you—as you are." "What did you think we were like?" he said. "Oh," I said, "very tall, with dark hair, very intimidating." Alfred grinned and gave a sniff—"Shall I tell her?" he said. "Gertrude told me to go and see you and if you were nice, to bring you home to supper." "Otherwise not," I said. They laughed.

On the way down, Alfred had told me about Amy Lowell and the Poetry Society. He said "there is a poetry society in town, where they wear evening dress and give dinners and have celebrities speak. You haven't heard of it? Well, doesn't amount to anything. You want to keep away from it." I said I supposed that Amy Lowell had been to it and he said "Yes, we had her at a meeting one night. She's impossible. About so wide—and she can't talk about anything but herself. Seemed to take no interest in anything but her own work, and 'Pound.' She has had a falling out with him—I think she's made it up but she told us all about it. She doesn't go with the crowd." I said I liked some of her work and he said "So do I but she was a great disappointment." Alfred then went on to say that he liked Ezra Pound personally though his work had fallen short and then I

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enlarged on the Aldingtons. Alfred said, "It is interesting to see how people's impressions of other people differ. This is in confidence, but I have had all sorts of trouble to get Richard Aldington to do anything for the magazine. I wrote to him and he didn't answer the letter and then I wrote to him again and got a very uncalled for disagreeable sort of letter that had no justification so far as I could see. I replied and told him what I thought and now things are straightened out and he's sent me something but I asked him to tell the others, Flint and Fletcher and H.D. to send some things and he has taken no notice of it." I said "Should you object to my writing to them and telling them about you and the magazine not mentioning of course that fact that you had talked of them?" "Not at all," he said. "I should be glad if you would. So I can do something for them possibly." After supper they showed me pictures, some photographs by Mr. Stieglitz and [Edward] Steichen, of Shaw, Anatole France and others, that Mr. Stieglitz had given them and some of the most superb pictures of snow and engines and boats that I have ever seen. Alfred said "Are you fond of Japanese prints? We have a hundred and one things to show you." (I am just waiting for you to see the pictures, old bird.) I asked if "Mrs. K." wrote poetry and Alfred said music is our other bug. (Mrs. K. plays the piano and he plays the mandolin.) She was wearing a blue crepe (turquoise blue) dress short sleeves and small round, low neck and sewed on a curtain while Alfred read a few things. She has brown hair and eyes and [the] loveliest smile I ever have seen. To be continued. Don't you skip.

Weaz

Although Moore gives this letter a title, calling it "part II," it is actually the third of a four-letter sequence describing her trip. "Mrs. Gerrould" is Katherine Gerrould, an American writer who taught at Bryn Mawr.

Sojourn in the Whale: part II
December 19, 1915

Dear Winks,

I was telling you about my passage of the Red Sea, or rather my experience in the whale. I had an extremely good time Wednesday night—the night I took dinner with the Kreymborgs. Friday morning, I repaired to the Daniel Gallery and saw an exhibition of things by William and Marguerite Zorach, paintings and embroideries. As the *Times* says, the embroideries "recall the great periods of embroidery" and the pictures

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gave me a chill they were so good. They have one waterfall and arrangement in stripes, that is as rhythmical as a zebra and as realistic as Maupassant. I met Mr. [Alanson] Hartpence who selects the work for the gallery and makes sales for the artists in some cases and "knows the ground." "Mr. K" had told me to introduce myself if I went to the Gallery. I did, and Mr. Hartpence was exceedingly cordial and thoughtful about showing me round. He is a positive dogmatist on art theory. I told the Kreymborgs what he said to me in comment on my comments and they were greatly amused and said there was not a soul, who had yet been discovered at least, who could talk "over" him or assert anything. (More of him, later.) I then went to 291. Mr. Stieglitz had told me to come back, that he would show me some things and Alfred had told me to ask to see his Congo things. He had nothing to show me yet, but gave me *Camera Work* to cut and look at. One number is entitled, "What is 291?" and contains an article by Hodge Kirnon the elevator man (colored) which is considered one of the best in the book. Mr. Kerfoot also has one in it and Alfred has one. Alfred had asked me if I had told Mr. Stieglitz that I knew him (Alfred) (and I *had* been delighted to see him and Mr. Kerfoot and "the gang" as contributors in a copy of *Camera Work* that I had seen at the Modern Gallery). So I told Mr. Stieglitz how pleased I had been at the above circumstance and said I had also seen some wonderful photographs at the Kreymborgs; (by him and by Steichen). I said I had not known there was anything in existence like Steichen's photograph of Gordon Craig—I said at all events I had never seen anything like it. "Well, there *is* nothing like it," he said. He told me to come in and take my coat off and look at the copies of *Camera Work*. He opened his knife and handed it to me, a plain nickel one with a ring in the end. Previously, however, while I had been examining some things against the wall, he said, "Mr. Kerfoot is here now." He went back to the aerial pocket wherever it was in which he had left Mr. Kerfoot after giving me the books and indicating the couch where I could sit (by the window) and I had a fear that Mr. Kerfoot would conclude his business at the door and "fly away" for I saw nothing of him despite the announcement that he was imminent. Presently Mr. Stieglitz came in with as nearly an approach to a selfconscious manner as it would be possible to attribute to him and said, "Miss Moore, Mr. Kerfoot," without however looking back at Mr. Kerfoot. He then went on attending with other matters, going into a nearby "pantry" and thence to the front of the studios or apartments or whatever you would call them. Mr. Kerfoot is burly—just Mr. Conover's build though a little taller, dressed in a green tweed coat which he drew off, and tan shoes (unministered to), and he had a cocked hat of some sort suitable to weather and a cane I think (I can't be sure). He has gray eyes and rather pugnacious though decent moustache

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and no flummeries. He drew up to the stove, a little barrel shaped affair with a tall jointed pipe, and kept darting venomous glances at me from that stronghold for a few minutes. There is a great deal [of] the type of humor about him that there is about Dr. Davis, he'll play you for about 5 minutes and then lay aside all posturing and state frankly what he thinks. He is an awful tease, though for some reason he is so direct that he is not annoying. I said, "Mr. Kerfoot you have given me a great deal of pleasure. I was just saying to Mr. Stieglitz that I had been surprised to find you in *Camera Work* and that Mr. Kreymborg was also, was a friend of Mr. Stieglitz's." (By the way, when I had mentioned Alfred Mr. Stieglitz had said, "Yes, he's one of my children.") I said, "I told Mr. Kreymborg that I had been delighted when I came on your notice of *Others* in *Life* and Mr. Kreymborg said he had put it in the front of the November *Others*. I thought it very generous of you to speak of *Others* for it is an experiment. You don't often speak of magazines do you?" "Never," he said "there has never been a notice of a magazine in *Life* before, so far as I know. I haven't taken any interest in poetry. This is the first time I have been able to see anything in it." I said "Of course some of it is trash, but what delights me is that the authors of it are willing to admit that it might be trash." "Oh Yes" he said "that must be understood. It's absolutely essential that they *should* admit it." I can't remember what he said exactly but it was something like that. I asked him if he knew *The Egoist*; he said not. I told him how I liked his review of Shaw (ptomaine and caviar) and of Julian Street (*Abroad at Home*) quoting; and we had a discussion of the word "haunting," both Mr. Stieglitz and Mr. Kerfoot downing me saying that a haunting quality was not the earmark of good art—but of bad art. I said I meant the sort of thing that annoyed you till you had to trace it to the source where you had first encountered it and he said, "Oh that's a different thing that's another sort of 'haunt.'" He asked me if I liked *The [New] Republic*. I said Yes and he said he had started out with it but had given it up, it was too "deep" for him. Then he said, "Who is that fellow, one of the editors of *The Republic*; he has been writing off and on, recently,—I can't think of his name." "Hackett?" I said. "That's the man," he said. I like him. He's the only one that writes for *The Republic* that excites my interest. I said, "I like him. In fact I like him so much I think it would be impossible for me to resent his mood or it would, if he continues to write about things as he has written about them in the past. He said something about the lavendered atmosphere of Bryn Mawr that amused me but that's a trifle. I don't take that into consideration." "Well, you wouldn't hold that against him," Mr. Kerfoot said. "I think his mind works in an interesting way. " "It does," I said. "I think he has just come over here from somewhere recently, hasn't he? He had an article on 'Lincoln and Immigrants' that made me think so." "I don't know" Mr. Kerfoot said. "I

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met him once and I have met his brother but I don't know where he is now." I said "He had an article in *The Republic* on Mrs. Gerould that delighted me. I was disappointed that you liked her so much (his "Vain Oblations"), and Francis Hackett said in *The Republic* just about what I should have liked to say." "He didn't like her you say—I haven't seen Hackett's article," Mr. Kerfoot remarked. "O," I said "he roasted her." "Roasted her, did he?" Mr. Kerfoot looked extremely delighted. "Well," he said, "in those stories Mrs. Gerould has succeeded in arousing a genuine sense of fear—a creepy feeling. Now in Poe's tales I am always conscious of the fact that the machinery is going round. I am interested but I am conscious of the fact that I am being horrified to order. In producing that sensation of horror Mrs. G. has done a notable thing." I said, "I am compelled to agree with you Mr. Kerfoot. It is Mrs. Gerould's attitude of intellectual superiority that I object to. Mr. Hackett was satirizing her point of attitude in her article on the "Decay of Culture" in *The Atlantic Monthly*, not her ability as writer of short stories. On the ground of craftsmanship, she can't be taken exception to." "Well," Mr. Kerfoot said, "that may be but you mustn't let that enter in to your estimate [of] a book. I try to know as little as possible about the people I am reviewing, so that I won't be influenced. It's distracting." I then quoted "Hackett" saying how he "grieved to see the sharp visaged New English spinster encounter the bustling crowds of the subway and lose a few beads of jet from her reticule" and so on. I then explained that he had had to reply to a complaint brought against him—and that he has said he was sorry to have been so clumsy that his remarks should have been taken personally. It was the lady's mind not her self he had seen in imagination, in N. York. I spoke of the Kreymborgs and said how lovely I thought them and how delighted I was to find them, not literary monstrosities, long haired, speaking a lingo etc. Mr. Kerfoot said he had only met Mrs. Kreymborg once or twice but that Mr. Kreymborg was a fine fellow, "very fine" or something, I forget what, that he had always liked him. I said "he looked as if he had been chastened and ground down by illness and that you felt conscience-stricken for having been so noisy, after talking to him." Mr. Kerfoot look[ed] appreciative. I asked him if he knew Mr. Richardson & F.G. Cooper. He said yes. About Mr. R. he said, "I know him well. He's the only advertising man I have ever known, that I like." I said, "Mr. Conover, a friend of my brother's, is a great friend of Mr. R's and he thinks everything of him. He says, the longer you know him the better you like him." "True" said Mr. Kerfoot. "I've known him a long time and what you say is true"; "he grows on you" or "he wears well." I forget what he said. (I have concocted painfully and w. prayer, a letter to Mr. Conover apropos of the above.) Have no fear. Mr. Stieglitz bore away Mr. Kerfoot to the front room, to tell him something, "*So* rich that he absolute-

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ly *must* tell him," he said. I offered to go (having monopolized Mr. Kerfoot anyhow unduly) but he wouldn't hear to it. "Sit still" he said—"don't move." Afterwhile Mr. Kerfoot came back and said he must go and shook hands and said, "I hope I'll meet you again." Afterwhile he drifted in a third time, for his hat I think. I said I had just been reading his impression of 291 and I thought "that was about the way it made you feel." He looked pleased and said goodby. He surely is a crackerjack.

Thursday afternoon the Cowdrays left. Zaroubi and I talked as we went back through the station, I to go to Bruno's (Garret), she to school. I took the Stage, to that gentleman's abode, only to find him out. His garret is over a drugstore on Washington Square. The drug clerk said I might find him at 10 Fifth Avenue. I walked down there into an imposing vestibule-basement entrance where there was a directory of names and entered a marble-lined elevator-equipped place and ascended 4 flights to Mr. Bruno's office. In one room was a cutting table piled with letter copy. File-cases stood about I think and a neat stenographer had been writing to beat the band prior to my entrance. Mr. Bruno came out and invited me in, to the inner lair, sat down on a light yellow folding chair with his back to the window a table in front of him and offered me another on the other side of the table facing him. He had just been shopping and had a pile of about 10 books on the floor beside him, Granville-Barker on Gordon Craig and others. He is, himself, tall and pallid with straight, colorless hair, he smiles brightly and slowly with great reserve power. He wore a black and white checked serge suit and as I said to Alfred, the white checks seemed to dance all over him. I said "I came to see if you have 'Mushrooms' Mr. Bruno. I have just been to your garret and couldn't get in, and the clerk in the drugstore told me to come here." "Real ones?" he said. "The only ones" I said "that I should be sorry to find you hadn't got." He said "I haven't here, but if you have a few minutes to spare, (you can spare 10 minutes?) I shall be through with my work and I shall go back with you." I thanked him and picked up a pamphlet. I said "Mr. Bruno you have printed work in *[Bruno's] Weekly* by L.S. or S.L. drawings like Egyptian hieroglyphics that I admire very much. I have wondered who did them. They are very sound." "They are good" he said. "They are done by a German living in Switzerland" and he didn't tell me anymore. "Perhaps you can find something here" he said reaching me a pile of chapbooks and pamphlets. "Look through them." We continued to talk and he didn't seem to be getting any work done. Presently I said "I am hindering you Mr. Bruno, perhaps I had better go. Would it suit you better to have me come again?" "Not at all" he said, "why I am taking you *with* me!" Then he said, "How did you know about me? How did you find me?" I said I had seen advertisements of *[Bruno's] Weekly* and that Mr. Kreymborg had told me

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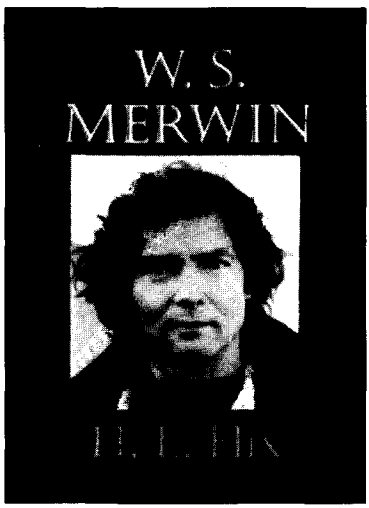
about him. "You know Mr. Kreymborg?" he said. "And you have met Mrs. Kreymborg?" He told me they had a lovely house in the country ("Grantwood," my boy) and that he had visited them. I told him I thought them lovely. He said, "You select from those what you like and you will accept them from me." (mushrooms, some of his own things, etc.) I said, "I don't wish you to let me make you poor, Mr. Bruno. I should like to pay you for them." He wouldn't let me. He called his stenographer and told her to bring me 2 tickets for the Thimble Theatre performance that night and gave me 2 for the Kreymborgs in case I should see them. I had said I was going there. "And the five last copies of the *Weekly*" he said. The most obsequious girl I have ever seen got the *Weeklies* from a file and procured the tickets. I told Alfred about it afterwards and he said, "Oh he is *powerful*." A messenger boy came in to say he couldn't find an address and Mr. Bruno said "You *must* find it—go again—you will *have* to find it." As I was leaving he said "I am very stupid but fot haf you done?" I told him about *The Egoist* and he said Mr. Aldington wrote to him every week or something as foolish. He urged me to write for the *Weekly* and said he would pay me "not much but something."

w. love, Winks



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"What's the story, Wishbone?" the song asks the fox terrier as though even a dog in a PBS children's program would know that stories are the secret of meaning, our way of making sense of our lives. Beginnings, middles and ends. Cause and effect. Character and plot. This happened because this other thing had happened before. Or because someone of a certain kind was the doer of the deed. Ever so often we think that the non-story-ness of our experience is the truth about it—and writers write postmodern novels. But the ache these induce! How we want someone to put it all together, to make a tale!

Robert Coover—who has written postmodern fiction and directs, at Brown University, the study of the serendipitous cohesions of hypertext—is still at it when he rewrites a fairy tale, one of the oldest of narrative forms. His *jeu d'esprit* called *Briar Rose* is as riddling as it is exquisite, and not at all the Legend of the Sleeping Beauty to which Charles Perrault gave nursery form in the seventeenth century. Wishbone would have difficulty telling it to the kids. The little chapters that compose this novelette *each* seem to return to the beginning or arrive at the end, though always with a difference, and there is never a clear sign that the story has progressed at all. There is certainly a prince who has undertaken the great adventure, but "not for the supposed reward—what is another lonely bedridden princess?—but in order to provoke a confrontation with the awful powers of enchantment itself." But, as he struggles in the "flesh-rending embrace" of the briars, the bones of his predecessors speak to him of the futility of his quest, for "all affirmations are grounded in willing self-delusion, masks, artifice, a blind eye cast toward the abyss." On and on the prince struggles in the briar hedge till he reaches the princess's room which is stinking with

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decay. Or never reaches it. Out in the thorny hedge he wonders if there is a castle or a princess at all, or, if she exists, whether she is not "more briar than blossom," and whether winning her might not prove worse than failure. In the castle, he wonders if he had ever really come through a hedge. Either way, he is propelled by his desire to "fulfill his own emblematic destiny." But what if he succeeds? "What is happily ever after, after all, but a fall into the ordinary, into human weakness, gathering despair, a fall into death."

For a hundred years the princess sleeps, and her dreams repeat themselves, though always in new forms. Again and again she dreams she is wakened by others than the designated prince—as by a gang of marauding peasants or by a woolly monkey who tickles and pinches. The witch who controls her fate recounts the Sleeping Beauty legend in horrid variations. In one, *all* the many princes who sought the princess were successful, and babies spilled from her as she lay in her bed—"a kind of wayside chapel for royal hunting parties." The princes' wives (for, of course, they had wives) boiled her babies in a hundred savory dishes and cooked up the princess herself in a foul stew for the poor. The princess protests, "real stories aren't like that." But what are real stories like? When the princess questions her fate and asks who she is, the witch tells her—"a door, accessible only to the adept . . . a secret passageway to nowhere but itself." What is Coover's anti-story about if not about story-telling and its insatiable desire for The End?

"Sleeping Beauty" is, of course, a primordial love story, one that shows love's supposedly transformative power—but, in Coover's version, the story also suggests the delusiveness of that emotion which sustains itself not on fulfillment but on deferral—a theme which may lie coiled within the recesses even of the original legend. This tale is still tellable, I realize, as I pick up Anita Brookner's latest novel. Nothing could be more simple—almost like a folk tale—than this biography of erotic obsession and frustration which could have taken place any time, any where. Everything else besides his passion is vague about Alan Sherwood. He may be English; he may be a solicitor by profession; a thin scrim of middle-class *moeurs* hangs behind his foregrounded life. But this life has been shaped chiefly by his relations with three women—Alice, his mother, Sarah, his father's granddaughter by a previous wife, and Angela, whom he married. His mother betrays him by marrying after many years of widowhood when he was her only sentimental focus. But it is she alone whose affection, somewhat distanced, is at hand at the end when it is all that is left to him. Angela, whom he never really loved, is dead. And Sarah is gone out of his life, if not out of his mind, forever.

Sarah is the classic *femme fatale* whose indifference to everyone else's rights or wishes is evident from the age of six when she throws a tantrum after being asked to surrender the other children's portions of birthday cake. But once she is a grown girl her cousin Alan finds that he has no choice at all.

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> Walking back through the misty park I already knew that Sarah was vain, unreliable, and feckless. In this I was correct. What I did not know—and this was something I never entirely managed to fathom—was the extent of her insouciance, her literal inability to take any matter seriously. I knew that if I fell in love with her I should be embarking on a long and hopeless odyssey of missed appointments, of telephone calls that were never returned, of explanations for absence that were infinitely more mystifying than the truth would have been, of sheer infuriating disappointment. But at the beginning of an affair one does not count the cost . . . .

Alan says, at one point, "I never read love stories," but Anita Brookner's readers will recognize the onset of a Proustian love obsession. It doesn't matter that this Swann occasionally succeeds in sleeping with Odette. As the relationship unrolls its predicted history, we see that, as he says, she was never entirely indifferent to him; "Rather, she was unknowable, enjoying our comings together as much as I did, but not appearing to remember them." Exasperated, Alan breaks things off and accepts the consolations of one of Sarah's friends who at least knows how to nurse him through the flu and cook meals—and before he quite knows what he is doing they marry. The marriage is a banal disaster. Angela doesn't like sex, and her pregnancy doesn't improve things.

And then Sarah turns up one day in his office, sitting on the corner of his desk, "her short black skirt riding up her thighs, her mane of crinkled red hair falling over one shoulder." She is soon on her way back to a lover in Paris. Though Alan drops everything and bolts after her, he never catches up with his inamorata, and he returns home to find that Angela has had a miscarriage for which everyone blames him. In the months that follow his wife regresses into depression and finally overdoses on sleeping pills. From all of this there is no recovery. Brookner's sad hero becomes a guilt-burdened solitary who spends vacations alone in a Swiss town where he knows no one, returning to London to his work and his small circle of relatives whose legal advisor he has become. Negotiations over inheritances bring him into contact once again with Sarah who has been willed an uncle's house and wants to sell it, thereby displacing the penniless widow. Alan persuades Sarah to give up the property—but this means she will have to marry her French protector.

There is something deliciously old-fashioned about Brookner's novel. Gracefully written and economic, it could be a *conte* by Balzac or Maupassant—ironical, witty, and studiedly superficial. Sarah, about whom one would like to be curious, is a novelistic convention whose "real" character it is bootless to ask about. I cannot help wondering, just the same, whether, if

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Brookner were a different sort of writer, with more general interests in society at large, she might not have composed a stronger novel by seeing her hero's problems differently than she has. Sarah's heartlessness and anarchy might be understood as a critique of Alan's exhausted middle-class virtues of fidelity and prudence. If Brookner were another sort of writer—though she is a good enough writer in her own way—she might have seen and let us see something in her hero's personality that suggests a dead end of class or culture, and the desperation of his sexual obsession as a desire for escape from these. But that is to do what Henry James warned the critic against doing—to argue with a writer's postulates, the thing she set out to do which is not what you might have preferred.

That the novel may exhibit not only personal life but also, often, general history is a part of its traditional habit. More than ever, today, the publishing industry seeks—quite opportunistically—to hang a best-seller onto the caboose of some recent headline (appropriately, the word "novel" is related to French *nouvelles*—which means "news"). Edna O'Brien's latest novel bases itself on the notorious 1992 case of a 14-year old Irish girl who had been raped, became pregnant, and was prevented by the Irish courts from going to England for an abortion. But this veteran, who has been writing fiction about her native country since the sixties, is too good a writer to succeed merely by topicality. Her vivid, violent narrative is "sensational" in joining the reader's senses and sensibilities to those of Mary MacNamara, who is raped by her father on page 3 and whose travail ends only when she miscarries at the end of the novel. Mary is a younger sister of those strong-feeling, innocent, yet intelligently perceiving "country girls" about whom O'Brien has often written. The novelist's own somewhat Joycean style is a poetic notation of the life pouring past and through her heroine's consciousness. In that opening scene, as her father presses her down onto a slope of gorse, we are spared no part of Mary's sense of cataclysm but also are made to notice, on the ground nearby, "an old Ovaltine tin with a picture of a lady with a saffron mantilla." Mary's eye, like her creator's, terrifyingly misses nothing.

What surrounds Mary is a world of brutality and charade. O'Brien introduces the reader early in the novel to a gaggle of small-town anti-abortionists on the occasion of a visit from a national leader.

> Roison is holding up two pictures, two contrasting pictures, a contented baby, curled up in a womb, and a torn baby, its body mangled, pools of black blood in the crevices and in the empty crater of its head. Arms go up, forearms go up which Roisin pulls aside, forcing them to look, to witness the butchery done in England and elsewhere by a clique of

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> killers . . . The women in their cardigans and garish frocks, their different lollipings of perfume and hairspray, sit stiffly, terrified of her.

Mary can tell her secret to no one—not to the sentimental nuns in the convent school and not even to her best friend, Tara, who has been reading a secretly purchased sex manual and tries to start her sexual life by puncturing her own hymen in advance. Mary's mother, just then, falls ill and dies, and left alone with her father she is raped by him again. When she tells him of her pregnancy, he denies his responsibility, then tries to ram her with a broom handle. As if this is not enough, O'Brien adds a gratituous horror: a passing stranger grabs Mary in a field one day and forces her to perform oral sex.

What help she finds at first is not effectual. After her father's second attack she runs away to Galway and is sheltered by a young street musician until someone from her village recognizes her and she is brought back. She tries to drown herself, is rescued by the local "countess"—a well-to-do woman who takes her off to London to an abortion clinic—but their flight is discovered and she is sent back to Dublin, a "ward of the court" virtually imprisoned while her trial is prepared. Those "defenders" of Mary's who want to save her by denying her the freedom to determine her own life now ring about her in a sort of black-comic dance of pious solicitude and barely governed rage. Worthy of caricature by Goya are the five Irish judges who will act in the case of the "little slut about to pour piss on the nation's breast." The pair of lawyers who undertake to defend her on her own terms are almost stymied because she will not accuse her father.

O'Brien's Mary is excessively mute and passive as a novelistic center, perhaps. But the rapist father is a triumph of expressive characterization. Whining, wily, self-excusing, James MacNamara is a repulsive yet weirdly engaging personality. A latent physical tenderness comes out in his relationship with animals. As his daughter is a "country girl" responsive to the "young shoots surgent in the sun, flowers and flowering weed in full regalia, a carnival sight" so this rural horse trader shows another side when he helps a mare to foal. "With a taut and terrible delicacy, as if it is a child that he is assisting into the world, he puts his hand inside again, using his palm then as a font, for the foal to put its chin on, and with his two fingers he tries to keep the nostrils open, saying the words, the same animal words, a Morse." And Mary thinks, vainly, that if only "she can be truly a child and make her needs known, he can feel as a father."

Topical, too, though reminiscent not of one but of a thousand current headlines, is Frederick Busch's novel about a man who is moved to find,

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to rescue, or else to avenge lost or abused or murdered girls, often about the same age as O'Brien's Mary, and some also raped by a father. For both writers, such crimes seem today's ultimate slaughter of innocence, the final perversion of the caring instinct by our species. When the hero of *Girls*, a college security officer, gets involved in a search for a disappeared fourteen-year-old, he says to himself, "I wondered if girls had been kidnapped, murdered, preyed upon for years. Maybe it was the times, and therefore everything human and otherwise from when he began might not be at fault."

Jack's compulsion to find out what happened to Janice Tanner has obscure roots. He and his wife are still grieving for the loss of their own child who had lived only a few months after her birth. She had never been exposed to the dangers of growing into the vulnerable girlhood of the victims he comes across in his work—a suicidal student treated callously by the professor who seduced her, a teenage runaway raped by her father, and others whose faces appear regularly on posters and milk cartons. A friend suggests he give the Tanners some help—maybe it will even do him good to do so—and for perhaps four-fifths of the book Jack tries to find a suspect and only gets beaten up by a small-time drug hustler who has nothing to do with the case. Jack's search, mostly conducted on hunch and impulse, is threaded through the preoccupations of his job which also include a possible plot to kill the Vice President, the imminent Commencement Speaker. All the while, too, he is coping with the coming-apart of his marriage and his attraction to another woman, with memories of his lost baby, and with his more remote memories of death and loss in Viet Nam. For a long time his own most continuous relation is that with his aging dog. The place is a small campus in upper state New York. The time is winter—an enveloping weather of deep snow and cold which, rendered by Busch's fine descriptive prose, seems to wrap the narrative in icy menace.

But as the weather softens the story comes out of its deep freeze and Jack gets at the truth abut the Tanner girl. Busch's novel—a whodunit, as it turns out—is as "sensational" as O'Brien's in its own, quiet way. Janice had not been abducted by a stranger but murdered by a trusted neighbor who had made her his juvenile mistress, then killed her when she wanted to disclose their relation. As we are often told—but find it hard to believe—it is most often a trusted adult friend or family member—especially a father or almost-father—who is the destroyer. He had buried her in a cornfield now covered with snow, but though spring was only weeks away no one wanted to wait for the snow to melt in order to find her: "We started clearing the field with shovels and buckets and of course our cupped, gloved hands. The idea was not to break any frozen parts of her away."

If facts—news or history or biography—inspire fiction, fiction is often

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indistinguishable from such materials. An extreme and remarkable testing of this comes from a German novelist who should be known better here. W. G. Sebald says, evasively, that his medium "is prose, not the novel" but that he has produced "a metaphor or allegory of a collective historical" experience. The four lives he tells about in *The Emigrants* are only related through the narrator's interest and the fact that they are representations of German expatriation and memory, in particular, of Jewish memory. One profile is that of the narrator's great uncle Ambros Adelwarth, who died in a hospital for the insane in Ithaca, New York, after a *belle epoque* life, before the narrator was born. Paul Bereyter had been the narrator's favorite school teacher in a small German city. During the period of the Third Reich he had been, as his obituary put it, "prevented from practicing his chosen profession" because his grandfather was Jewish. Henry Selwyn, an elderly gentleman living in eccentric retirement when the narrator met him in Norwich, had emigrated from Lithuania at the turn of the century. Max Ferber, a painter he met in Manchester, turned out to be another emigrant; in 1939 he had left Munich at the age of fifteen, parted forever from parents who lingered too long behind. The fifth emigrant, whom I have cagily called "the narrator," would appear to be Sebald himself, who left Germany in 1966 and now teaches at the University of East Anglia just like the reminiscing speaker who winds bits of his own life into his encounters with these others—this resemblance serving to reinforce the veracity of his reports.

The factuality of all we are told is not only reinforced by the form of these narratives but by the interleaving of the text with photographs—irrefutable testaments of literal truth. Here is the Bernese Oberland where Selwyn met his friend Johannes Naegeli, an alpine guide who would be swallowed by the Oberaar glacier in 1914, as well as the clipping from a Swiss newspaper reporting the discovery of his remains after seventy-two years. Here is the floor plan of Bereyter's classroom the teacher had required his students to draw and a photo which "included myself" of the children at their desks, as well as one which shows Bereyter "on the left . . . terribly thin" when he was working in exile as a tutor. There is a photo of the Hotel Eden in Montreux where Ambros Adelwarth worked as a young man and of the house in Kyoto where he was the valet of a rich Japanese and of the estate on Long Island where he took charge of a rich youth, Cosmo Solomon. We see a photo of Ambros, very handsome in Arab costume, taken when he and this companion were traveling together, and reproductions of pages of the diary (not very decipherable!) kept by him during those travels. There is a photo of Ferber's father on a ski holiday in 1939 the last time his son saw him—looking quite carefree, though he had already been interned for six weeks in Dachau.

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Sebald seems to want to say, on the one hand, that the past exists and is superior to any imagining, that its authenticity is so powerful that it can never be denied; it is no mere *story*. His is that survivor's conviction of the importance of memory, above all the memory of the War and the Holocaust, which are almost never mentioned directly. But how does a postwar German-Jewish child like Sebald "remember" this past time? The narrator describes his family's move in 1952 to "S——," and his childish pleasure in the bustle of a big city: "It was, I thought, particularly auspicious that the rows of houses were interrupted here and there by patches of waste land on which stood ruined buildings, for ever since I had once visited Munich I had felt nothing to be so unambiguously linked to the word *city* as the presence of heaps of rubble, fire-scorched walls, and the gaps of windows through which one could see the vacant air." If one denies the superiority of that memory to any fiction one resembles Ferber's Uncle Leo, who saw a photograph of the book burning in Würzburg (this too is included by Sebald in the book) but insisted that it was a fake; the burning had taken place at night so how could the picture have been taken? But to recover the past through the memories of others is like the recovery of the body of Selwyn's friend from the grip of a glacier: "And so they are returning to us, the dead. At times they come back from the ice more than seven decades later and are found at the edge of the moraine, a few polished bones and a pair of hobnailed boots."

And yet, of course, we are permitted, if we wish, to regard all the photos in this album-like book as fakes. *The Emigrants* is a novel. Its adroitly managed incorporation of fact also allows for fantasy and art. The narrator returns to Deauville in 1991 to look for Uncle Ambros and Cosmo and dreams that he sees them there together, in 1913, "taking tea out in the courtyard, or in the hall leafing through the latest papers, which were brought early every morning at breakneck speed from Paris to Deauville by Gabriel the chauffeur," or at the races at La Touque Hippodrome. All the *élégantes* of the era are there, the ladies "wearing lace dresses through which their silken undergarments gleamed in Nile green, crevette, or absinth blue." There is an incomparable glimpse of the two young men dining at the Normandy together, eating a lobster out of a single silver platter: "Ambros was steadily taking the lobster apart, with great skill, placing little morsels before Cosmo, who ate them like a well brought up child." Sebald may have some inclination to be an illusionist who mixes memory and dream—like Vladimir Nabokov who appears several times in the book, is the subject of one of Ferber's faceless portraits, "Man with a Butterfly Net," and is shown also, with the net, in a well-known photograph.

Sebald has admitted, I understand, that Ferber is not one real man but a combination of his Manchester landlord and an artist he knows. Ferber

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is described as making his pictures by an endless application of paint and its removal, the scrapings covering the floor of his studio. The onlooker might feel, says the narrator, that one of his portraits "had evolved from a long lineage of gray, ancestral faces, rendered into ash but still there, as ghostly presences on the harried paper." This description recalls the paintings—and perhaps procedure—of the English artist Frank Auerbach, who may be the real artist Sebald knows. Robert Hughes calls Auerbach's art "inquisitorial" and describes it as having for its subject not the observed facts or their kinetic equivalents but "the process of discovery." As such an artist, Ferber may also be a representation of Sebald himself. The remarkable sentence just quoted, like much of the prose of *The Emigrants*, gestures mutely at something beyond itself, that ghostly ancestry "rendered into ash," which the writer cannot look at directly yet strives to know.

The 1997 Pulitzer Prize brings me back, finally, to Steven Millhauser's *Martin Dressler*, a novel, its publisher boasts, that "captures place and time so vividly that history and fiction became thoroughly blurred." In fact, the blurb does not do justice to the brilliant fabulousness of this hallucinatory book which is as much a fairy tale—like *Briar Rose*—as it is a reconstruction of the real New York of the 1890's. Brilliantly authentic with precise details exhumed from historical record, it is also a *märchen* that begins, as such a tale should, with an immemorial once-upon-a-time: "There once lived a man named Martin Dressler, a shopkeeper's son, who rose from modest beginnings to a height of dreamlike good fortune."

Martin's "rise" seems, for a while, to be a model Horatio Alger fable of the step by step elevation of a poor boy by dint of industry and wit. It begins in his father's tobacconist shop where, at twelve, he learns to roll cigars and boosts business by a clever window display. But soon he is employed as a bellboy at the luxurious Vanderlyn hotel. He is fascinated by its vast organized design, "a great, elaborate structure, a system of order, a well-planned machine that drew all these people to itself and carried them up and down in iron cages and arranged them in private rooms. He admired the hotel as an invention, an ingenious design, a kind of idea, like a steam boiler or a suspension bridge." It is the beginning of his obsession with the idea of businesses and social structures as vast machines and of himself as an energizing force. By the time he is eighteen he is the Manager's secretary and knows everything there is to know about the hotel's hierarchy and functional gears and switches. But his dreams go further.

> Martin thought of iron El trestles winding and stretching across the city, of department store windows and hotel lobbies, of electric ele-

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> vators and street-car ads, of the city pressing its way north on both sides of the great park, of dynamos and electric lights, of ten-story hotels, of the old iron tower near the depot at West Brighton with its two steam-driven elevators rising and falling in the sky—and in his blood he felt a surge of restlessness, as if he were a steam train spewing fiery coal smoke into the black night sky as he roared along a trembling El track, high above the dark storefronts, the gas-lit saloons, the red-lit doorways, the cheap beer dives, the dance halls, the gambling joints, the face in the doorway, the sudden cry in the night.

It is only a matter of time before he has bought an abandoned wax museum, converting it into a successful lunchroom. This proliferates into a chain of lunchrooms serving identical food (he has anticipated Macdonald's!), and he sells the chain and buys the Vanderlyn. The old hotel is modernized and a "subterranean street of small shops" (a shopping-mall!) is installed in its basement. He is inspired to make his hotel emulate the new department stores which he saw as

> immense solutions to the problems of organizing space, of bringing together in a complex harmony an astonishing number of often clashing notes . . . . the ingenious inclusion of elements that ought to have clashed but didn't: the tea rooms and cafeterias where customers refreshed themselves in order to gain more energy for buying, the organ in the rotunda, the odd services—a bank, a barbershop—that seemed to make of each grand emporium a little enclosed city, a roofed city with an intricate system of elevators and stairs moving shoppers vertically through a world of attractions. [Department stores and hotels] were experimental cities, cities in advance of the city, for they represented in different forms the thrust toward vertical community that seemed to Martin the great fact of the modern city . . . Martin imagined great structures hundreds of stories high, each a city in itself, rising across the land.

And now the dream takes off. Martin hires for the creation of the New Vanderlyn a young architect who has already designed steel-frame department stores of advanced type and entertainment parks at Coney Island. Soon they have also created the Dressler, a huge apartment-hotel with dining rooms and shops "in a labyrinthian arcade," a whole interior "Theater District," and dioramas, museums, and artificial landscapes representing far-away places (a Disney World!) Martin also engages the services of a new kind of specialist—an advertising professional who understands the way

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consumer desire can be created in a vacuum. A New Dressler exceeds the old and is advertised as "MORE THAN A HOTEL: A WAY OF LIFE." It is the largest family hotel in the world; it raises the principle of total incorporation to a higher level still. Its many underground levels contain parks with live squirrels and chipmunks, a complete department store, the Atlantic City boardwalk with roller-chair rides, a series of "Vacation Retreats" with campgrounds, pine forests, flowing streams with trout in them, mineral spas, cruise ships traveling on simulated ocean waves, all the great art museums with copies of their famous contents, and complete replicas of famous places like Shakespeare's birthplace or the canals of Venice with actors skillfully taking parts in authentic costumes. And Martin's dream, having attained this surreal realization, prompts an even more audacious effort to replace the real. A new, even larger building, with even more underground worlds, the Grand Cosmosarium, opens in 1905. Everything that has ever happened, every imaginable experience, is available within it. But the public begins to be frightened; there are reports of horrors on the lowest sub-basement levels, few tenants apply, and, before long, it is slated for demolition. As in a fable the ending implies a moral when, one day, after months when he has not ventured outdoors, Martin wanders out of his doomed Grand Cosmo and is almost blinded by the real sun and blue sky as he sits on a bench and watches a barge slide down the river.

Martin Dressler's life contains more than I have related—for he is a real man, after all, with some meager interest in other things than superhotels. He discovers sex with rich Mrs. Hamilton when he is still a bellboy and manages to resist the adoration of a younger hotel guest by patronizing a nearby whorehouse. In time, he makes the acquaintance of a mother and her two daughters and is caught for a while in a web of erotic suspense in his relation with the three, but marries the beautiful but frigid Caroline—a sort of Sleeping Beauty whom he cannot awaken. Her sister, Emmeline, becomes his business assistant and shares his dreams but the woman who really turns him on with her melancholy submissiveness is one of the hotel maids. A good many pages of the novel are occupied with this depressing erotic history which seems an odd undercurrent to its major theme. Does Millhauser intend a reinforcing moral? Does the novelist want to imply that his hero's grandiose "American dream" is the obsession of a man who has lost the capacity for fulfilling the novel's oldest theme—a love story? A somewhat trite idea, if so, and hardly convincing. But a bizarre and profound magic realism makes the rest of the novel—Millhauser's historical vision—mesmerizing.

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GEORGE MONTEIRO

Cohn's Descent

Seventy years after the publication of *The Sun Also Rises* the import of Robert Cohn's "jewishness" remains an open question. Does the anti-Semitism directed at Cohn by his companions constitute evidence that Hemingway is himself an anti-Semite? Because the pertinent facts are not self-evident, or, when determined, easily interpreted, the question continues to vex readers of Hemingway's first novel. A good deal of evidence external to *The Sun Also Rises* can be assembled for pretty much whatever case one wishes to make on either side.

But the question of Hemingway's anti-Semitism is not the focus here. Rather I take it as clearly reflective of the times that when Hemingway's characters are most virulent about Cohn's "jewishness"—whether they refer to his acting "superior" ("Well, let him not get superior and Jewish," says Bill Gorton) or his showing forth his suffering—it is because they are keenly annoyed at him for not "fitting in" with their rather narrow little band of self-defined "insiders." He is incapable of *aficion* when it comes to bullfighting nor can he be—unlike Count Mippipopulous—"quite one of us" (to quote Brett Ashley).

Despite Jake Barnes's annoyance at Cohn—who bothers him at work (he does not know he is not wanted at the office, going down with Jake for a drink but either missing or ignoring the hint that he is to go away when Jake excuses himself to go back to his work, returning with him only to fall asleep on a couch)—and his disapproving remark that a Cohn-in-love is a man who lets his good tennis game go to pieces, it is not until the coterie of tourist would-be-aficionados go to Spain that Cohn perfects his unwelcome self. His gaffs are telling. He does not bother to pick out his own fishing gear, preferring that Jake do it for him, and then fails to show up for the fishing itself, preferring to intercept Brett at Biarritz and sending Jake an abbreviated telegram that offers inadequate information, failing to write up to the number of words allotted him for the price he pays for the ambiguous and cryptic telegram he chooses to send. He foregoes the opportunity for new experience in a new country, preferring to tag after Brett and Mike. To adapt one of Hemingway's favorite quotations, from Christopher Marlowe by way of T. S. Eliot: "Thou has committed fornication but that was in another country; besides the wench is with another man." He makes known that he expects that the bullfights will bore him,

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and although Jake notices that Cohn is not as bored as he thought he would be, he observes that Cohn does not "learn" a thing about bullfighting. Nor does he learn anything about Spain or the Spanish people. He is simply "not there" when the important things happen, say when Brett focuses on the way the bull uses its horns when striking into the horse. He has not bothered to learn any Spanish. He does not see the change in the landscape when he and Bill and Jake, riding in the hired chauffered car, cross the border into Spain:

> For a while the country was much as it had been; then, climbing all the time, we crossed the top of a Col, the road winding back and forth on itself, and then it was really Spain. There were long brown mountains and a few pines and far-off forests of beech-trees on some of the mountainsides. The road went along the summit of the Col and then dropped down, and the driver had to honk, and slow up, and turn out to avoid running into two donkeys that were sleeping in the road. We came down out of the mountains and through an oak forest, and there were white cattle grazing in the forest. Down below there were grassy plains and clear streams, and then we crossed a stream and went through a gloomy little village, and started to climb again. We climbed up and up and crossed another high Col and turned along it, and the road ran down to the right, and we saw a whole new range of mountains off to the south, all brown and baked-looking and furrowed in strange shapes.
>
> After a while we came out of the mountains, and there were trees along both sides of the road, and a stream and ripe fields of grain, and the road went on, very white and straight ahead, and then lifted to a little rise, and off on the left was a hill with an old castle, with buildings close around it and a field of grain going right up to the walls and shifting in the wind. I was up in front with the driver and I turned around. Robert Cohn was asleep, but Bill looked and nodded his head.

It bodes ill for Cohn and his understanding of the Spanish ethos when he sleeps through his first "view" of the landscape. It is small wonder, then, that Cohn will fail to see that Pedro Romero must fight him to exhaustion and beyond, that the young bullfighter can not "give up" when thrashed or even begin to understand Cohn's sportsman's offer to shake hands when he finds himself incapable of continuing to beat his "vanquished" foe.

Narrating retrospectively, Jake has ample opportunity in his opening account of Robert Cohn to plant clues to shadow forth the social disaster

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that will befall the Princeton-educated "Jew" in Spain. He does not mention that the Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century or that in visiting Spain in the twentieth century Cohn is making a sort of "return." And there is no evidence, so centered is he on Brett (he runs the gamut from emotional involvement to courtly judgment, from fighting for her honor to calling her a Circe who turns men into suffering swine), that Cohn sees his visit as an ironic, inverted return of the "Jew." Yet Jake may be counting on the attentive reader's catching this irony, for he makes it clear that Cohn has Sephardic antecedents. Through his father Robert Cohn was a member "of one of the richest Jewish families in New York," Hemingway writes, "and through his mother of one of the oldest." In this direct, if unemphatic, way he establishes Cohn's Sephardic credentials by separating the two strands of his lineage—the "richest" families from the "oldest" families. The implication is that Cohn's father is not a member of one of the "oldest" families and that his mother, whether rich or not, is. The split is historical. The "oldest" Jewish families in New York, writes Stephen Birmingham in *The Grandees*, were "the *oldest* American Jewish families, and they traced themselves back to the arrival of what has been called the 'Jewish Mayflower [the *Saint Charles*],' in 1654, and even farther back to medieval Spain and Portugal, where they lived as princes of the land." These Jews had arrived from Brazil, having lost the protection of the Dutch, who had lost their hold on Brazil to Portugal. Again Birmingham writes: "Many records of America's first Jewish community are lost or incomplete and are complicated by Marrano aliases [those of the so-called secret Jews of the Iberian Peninsula]. But from what can be pieced together about them, it seems probable that the twenty-three consisted of six family heads—four men (with their wives) and two other women who in all likelihood were widows, since they were counted separately—and thirteen young people. The heads of these families were Asser Levy, Abraham Israel De Piza (or Dias), David Israel Faro, Mose Lumbroso, and—the two women—Judith (or Judica) Mercado (or De Mercado, or de Mereda) and Ricke (or Rachel) Nunes." In fact, the twenty-three refugees from Brazil, taken way off their course, were not the first Jews to land in New Amsterdam. According to Cecil Roth, in *A History of the Marranos*, "a German or Polish Jew named Jacob, son of Samson (Jacob Barsimson)," had preceded them by "a few months." This fact is largely ignored by the *ancien régime* of the New York Sephardim.

The Jews who came later to New York, mainly in the nineteenth century, and who eventually numbered among them some of the richest Jewish families, came from middle Europe. They were not Sephardim but Ashkenazim. Considered "upstarts," writes Birmingham, they are "Kuhns, Loebs, Schiffs, Warburgs, Lehmans, Guggenheims, and their like—who

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achieved such importance in banking and commerce in the latter part of the nineteenth century; who, by the sheer force of their money, grew to dominate the American Jewish community; and whom the older-established Sephardim therefore looked down upon and actively resented." As one might have expected, Sephardim and Ashkenazim inevitably intermarried. "The old Sephardic names with their Spanish and Portuguese musicality—Lopez, Mendes, Mendola, de Sola, de Silva, de Fonseca, Peixotto, Solis," notes Birmingham, "begin gradually to be replaced by the somewhat harsher-sounding Ashkenazic, or German, names, as the old Iberian families feel the influx of the Germans throughout the nineteenth century, as the Sephardim and Ashkenazim intermarry and the Germans—as the Sephardim complain—try to 'dominate' with their stiff-necked ways."

That their collective Iberian experience remains of some significance to the Sephardim, however, is insisted upon. "The Spanish-Portuguese part of their collective past is of enduring importance to the Sephardim of America," says Birmingham. It gives "these old families their feeling of relevance, of significance, of knowing where they 'fit into the scheme of things,'" for they are a people of historical substance and accomplishment. In fact, it was "in both Spain and Portugal in the years before they were forced to flee, [that] the Jews—as a people, a race—had been able to reach heights of achievement unlike anything that had happened elsewhere in their long history." Cohn behaves as if he were unaware of the long Iberian component, through his Sephardic mother, in his heritage. When some of Jake's friends seem to detect in Cohn something they call his "superior" way, they are merely fueling the fire in a situation that seems only to damn him further in Jake's eyes. As Bill says of Robert Cohn, "He's got this Jewish superiority so strong that he thinks the only emotion he'll get out of the fight will be being bored." Of the "Sephardim" *The Jewish Encyclopedia* observes: "Many sufferings, which they had endured for the sake of their faith, had made them more than usually self-conscious; they considered themselves a superior class—the nobility of Jewry."

His entry in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* begins by pointing out that "Harold Albert Loeb [is] now best-known as the prototype for the character Robert Cohn in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*." Loeb had recognized immediately upon the novel's publication that he was the model for Robert Cohn. In Paris Loeb had talked with Hemingway about his private life, making Loeb himself, notes Bertram Saranson, "the chief source of Hemingway's knowledge about him." But Hemingway had not only appropriated the details of Loeb's life; he had made Cohn obnoxious and foolish. And that "change" Loeb resented. When he made his indignation known, it was Hemingway's turn to complain. "A guy named Loeb was in town and was going to shoot me," he wrote to Scott Fitzgerald (pre-

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sumably because as a novelist he would understand what Hemingway had to put up with), "so I sent word around that I would be found unarmed sitting in front of Lipp's brasserie from two to four on Saturday and Sunday afternoon and everybody who wished to shoot me was to come and do it then or else for christ sake to stop talking about it. No bullets whistled. There was a story around that I had gone to switserland [*sic*] to avoid being shot by demented characters out of my books." Twenty-five years later, justifying his use of "actual people" in fiction, Hemingway again brought up the case of Harold Loeb. "When I started I wrote some short stories about actual things and two of them hurt people," he explained to a young scholar writing about Hemingway's apprentice years.

> I felt bad about it. Later if I used actual people I used only those for whom I had completely lost respect and then I tried to give them a square shake. I know this all sounds very noble but it is not really horse-shit. The man who identifies himself as Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises* once said to me, 'But why did you make me cry all the time?' I said, 'Listen, if that is you then the narrator must be me. Do you think that I had my prick shot off or that if you and I had ever had a fight I would not have knocked the shit out of you? We boxed often enough so that you know that. And I'll tell you a secret: you do cry an awful lot for a man.'

That Loeb had long since lost Hemingway's respect is evident in his comment to the painter Henry Strater in 1932 regarding the racial or national identity of someone named Klein. He wondered whether he was "one of those Kleins—Germans are swell—kikes not so good—We don't want him to turn out to be Harold Loeb." Weighing in on the subject as well was Kitty Cannell (Hemingway's model for Frances Clyne [suggesting *Klein*], Cohn's mistress), who later claimed that her friend had boasted: "I'm tearing those bastards apart [in *The Sun Also Rises*]. I'm putting everyone in it and that kike Loeb is the villain."

Harold Loeb (1891-1974) was a native of New York. He attended Princeton University, graduating in 1913. He had met Hemingway in Paris in the spring of 1924 at one of Ford Madox Ford's Thursday literary teas in the Quai d'Anjou. Carlos Baker, Hemingway's biographer, describes Loeb as he appeared at the time: "a well-dressed, dark-haired young man with broad shoulders, a firm chin, and the profile of a classical Greek wrestler." The two young writers became friends, taking trips together and playing tennis. Boni and Liveright published Loeb's first novel *Doodab* in 1925, and Loeb seems to have had a hand in getting the same publisher to

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take on *In Our Time*, Hemingway's first book for a commercial press. Loeb was on the trip to Pamplona that furnished Hemingway with the materials for *The Sun Also Rises*. It was on that trip that Loeb got so far under Hemingway's skin that he turned himself into the model for the scapegoat of *The Sun Also Rises*. "What infuriated Hemingway was Harold's unpardonable crime of being bored with the bullfighting and of abandoning the brave company of men (at Burguete) to chase after Duff [Twysden]," thought Donald Ogden Stewart, who had also been part of the "Parisian" group attending the fiesta of San Fermin. Loeb thought the bull's death agony was, as quoted by James Mellow, "in some obscure way, shameful." As he put it in 1972, at a conference in Paris sponsored by the editors of the *Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual*, "The horses' injuries didn't bother me much. (That was before the padding, and many of them were gored and dragged their intestines along the ground.) But the bull came out with such splendor, to be gradually weakened and weakened and weakened by picadors and banderilleros until the matador could get near enough to kill him. It seemed pathetic."

Harold Loeb came of "two prominent Jewish families in New York: the Loebs and the Guggenheims," writes Baker. It will be recalled that the older community of Sephardim in New York looked down on the Loebs and Guggenheims, as well as all the other "Germans" who arrived in the nineteenth century as, in Birmingham's words, "upstarts" and "usurpers." In fact, writes Birmingham in 1971 of a different New Yorker named Loeb, "the present head of the banking firm Loeb, Rhoades & Company, is more ancestrally proud of his mother, the former Adeline Moses, than of his father, who founded the giant banking house." For "the Moseses," he explains, are "an old Sephardic family from the South who, though somewhat depleted from the days when they had maintained a vast plantation with slaves and cotton fields, were nonetheless disapproving when their daughter married Mr. Loeb, 'an ordinary German immigrant.'"

The Professors Like Vodka, dedicated to Malcolm Cowley, was Harold Loeb's second novel. He had followed up *Doodab* (which Hemingway read in page proof), with his own novel about Americans in Paris in 1927. It is known that Hemingway requested a copy of the latter novel, though what he thought of it remains anyone's guess. Whatever else its intentions, *The Professors Like Vodka* can be read as Loeb's answer (before the fact) to *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). When Loeb complained about Hemingway's turning him into Cohn, his complaint was personal, the complaint of a friend who acknowledged the fictional character's personal traits as his own. He did not cry "anti-Semitism." For, as he later insisted, he had never found Hemingway or *The Sun Also Rises* to be anti-Semitic. He explained, in an afterword to a later re-issuing of the novel:

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> Certainly, Hemingway was out to get Robert Cohn and Robert Cohn was Jewish, but Hemingway for the most part used Bill Gorton who was supposed to be based on Bill Smith or Donald Ogden Stewart or both of them to express anti-Semitism. Both Bill Smith and Donald Ogden Stewart were to marry Jewish wives and live happily with them ever after. I learned to like them both and I never knew gentiles less touched with anti-Semitism. . .Barnes, the hero of *The Sun Also Rises*, who presumably was based on Hemingway, also is supposed by many commentators to hate Jews. However, I saw a great deal of Hem for over a year without ever having observed a touch of this prevalent prejudice.

Donald Ogden Stewart explains the matter a bit differently. He sees Hemingway's treatment of Loeb in *The Sun Also Rises* as part of a larger pattern of attack and repudiation by Hemingway of his friends and benefactors.

> He and I were great friends from '23 until '26, and then the thing happened that I think eventually happened to most of Ernest's friends: the minute he began to love you, or the minute he began to have some sort of an obligation to you of love or friendship or something, then is when he had to kill you. Then you were too close to something that he was protecting. He, one-by-one, knocked off the best friendships he ever had. He did it with Scott; he did it with Dos Passos—with everybody. I think that it was a psychological fear he had that you might ask something from him. He didn't want to be overdrawn at your bank.

Stewart's final metaphor of banks and overdrafts gives his statement an authority he himself might not have claimed. There is the remarkable letter Hemingway's mother wrote to him in 1920, reminding him that a mother's love for her child is like "a bank." "Each child that is born to her, enters the world with a large and prosperous bank account, seemingly inexhaustible." But that, with constant withdrawals over time—and this is especially so in Ernest's case—"the bank account is perilously low, for there is nothing coming in, no deposits. . . unless, in other words, you come into your manhood—there is nothing before you but bankruptcy: *You have over drawn*." Perhaps Hemingway could not avoid the guilt instilled in him by the sort of relationship his mother insisted upon, but he could watch for it in his friends and thus nip it before it reared its ugly head by repu-

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diating such friends in time. If Loeb's Jewishness was more of a tool useful in Hemingway's repudiation of Loeb than one of its causes, perhaps the same argument can be used to explain Jake's ambivalent feelings about Cohn and his Jewishness. But into the mix must go Hutchins Hapgood's point about Hemingway's use of his Jewishness against Cohn. Obviously referring to Loeb though not naming him, Hapgood explains to Hemingway, as he reports in *A Victorian in the Modern World* (1939):

> Your character of Cohn in *The Sun Also Rises,* is a remarkable picture of a human being. I know the man who served as a sitter to you for the portrait, know him very slightly, and it is a striking fact that only on the slightest acquaintance, he affected me the same way as he affected the other characters in your book. Without doing or saying anything that I could fairly resent, he yet made me feel uncomfortable, the two or three times I was with him. But he made me uncomfortable not because he was a Jew but because he was the man you call Cohn. It has never seemed to me to be fair to put into an unfavorable picture of a human being the factor of race as a causal relationship. It is certainly something which one cannot expect the Jews to like.

Such misuse was not only unfair on Hemingway's part, as Hapgood charges, but, it might be added, unrelentingly abusive on Jake's. Joyce Carol Oates draws a telling contrast between Hemingway's Jake and Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, when she discusses "the Jew Robert Cohn":

> The fact that Cohn cannot drink as heavily as the others, that the bullfight sickens him (especially the disemboweling of the picador's horse), that in this noisy macho milieu he finally breaks down and cries—these things seem altogether to his credit; he emerges as the novel's most distinctly drawn character. One waits in vain, however, for Jake Barnes to rise to Nick Carraway's judgment of Jay Gatsby: "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

Be all that as it may, Loeb the writer had already addressed his discomfort with his Jewishness when *The Sun Also Rises* appeared in the fall of 1926. Although *The Professors Like Vodka* was published later, it was written before the publication of *Sun*. Loeb's hero, John Mercado, teaches American literature at an American university. When we meet him he is spending his summer in Paris, accompanied by a fellow teacher named Bill

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Halsey. Mercado has made no secret of his Jewishness in the United States. A former student addresses him, drunkenly: "You're a Jew, aren't you, Mercado?"; yet "in all the years they had known each other," John Mercado "had been so lacking in racial consciousness that Halsey usually forgot he was of different stock than himself." In fact, "though he was a pure-blooded Jew, he had just about forgotten it. He supposed it was because his family had not been religious for several generations and neither his looks nor his name denoted his race. Perhaps it was only natural that the fact of his Oriental origin should have dropped back into the dark corners of his consciousness . . ." Of course, Loeb had chosen to give his hero a Sephardic name that stretches back to the original twenty-three Jewish settlers of New Amsterdam in 1654 but which was so unusual as to be unidentifiable as Jewish except to the cognescenti. Loeb knew what he was doing by endowing his hero with a name going back to seventeenth-century New York, for his own link to the so-called "first American Jewish families" came by virtue of his first marriage in 1914 to Marjory Content, a direct descendant of one of the "twenty-three." It is through this connection that Loeb makes his one appearance in "The Book," Malcolm H. Stern's *First American Jewish Families* (1991).

Mercado's Jewish consciousness asserts itself in Paris, however, when he discovers that his Russian coquette hates Jews. He agonizes over whether to reveal himself as one of those she hates and claims to have murdered ("they're not people," she insists) or to keep his racial identity under wraps. He vacillates.

> He was a Jew. Her attitude rent the screen that hung between him and his ancestry. His mind hurtled back through the centuries. He stood, in vivid mental snapshots, beside Saul and David, the warrior kings. He served as a soldier under the Maccabees, fighting victoriously against stupendous odds. He manned a rampart at Jerusalem, while Titus, with the whole Roman Empire behind him, drove his cohorts to one assault after another. His race was not only a warrior race but the only ancient race of importance which had kept its virility down to his day. Poets, philosophers, scientists, prophets, musicians! And this charming blue-eyed creature had killed Jews because they were not people. He suddenly grew very tall. This sprig of a muddied upstart nation dared to be contemptuous of his people...He had always thought of himself as a teacher of literature, drowsing through uneventful days in an American college town. All at once he was the last of a mighty race, courting a murderess who had tortured his brethren.

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Yet at his back, at other times, he hears the facts of history. A scene he had once witnessed "kept rising in his mind":

> He had once watched a colony of ants perish in a hearth fire. They had been hibernating in the trunk of a tree and had not awakened while their home was being chopped into two-foot lengths. However, the warmth of the fire, which was licking the walls of their domicile, aroused them from their lethargy. Rushing out of the one available exit they discovered themselves on an island in a sea of flame. Some ran wildly here and there, exploring their remaining terrain to the last inch. Others kept close to the hole from which they had issued, occasionally diving down only to run out again when the increasing heat warned them of their imminent destruction.
>
> A few, bolder than the rest, dropped from the smoking bark, and were shriveled before they had fallen on to the bed of incandescent coals.
>
> The scene kept rising in his mind. Sometimes he likened the ants to Jews who were being butchered as they fled from their flaming houses. Sometimes he was an ant, not knowing which way to turn in the conflagration that threatened him. His brain was too distraught to criticize his mixed metaphors. Besides, the picture was not evoked by his will but seemed to rise up before him of its own volition.

(It hardly seems coincidental that Hemingway includes a similar insect parable in *A Farewell to Arms*, though his telling of it stops short of Loeb's Professor Mercado's interpretation of it as a parable of the terrible historical fate of Jews.)

Loeb's novel does not pretend to resolve the problems of Jewish self-identity and anti-Semitism that it brings up, though John Mercado does reveal that he is a Jew just after he has made love to the Russian woman who has captivated him. Fittingly, she calls herself Cléopâtre, identifying herself as a "type of the Fatal Woman" who, as Mario Praz defines her in *The Romantic Agony*, "massacred in the morning the lovers who had passed the night with her." If Loeb's machinations of plot, always a bit silly, turn entirely so—its more serious implications petering out in trivialities—there is one notable exception at the end that almost redeems it. Cléopâtre's last words ring ominous and prophetic of what would befall the Jews at the hands of the Germans in the 1930s and 1940s. "Le Monsieur [John Mercado], I am sorry for him. He was cursed before he came into the world. . . .It is but a kindness when we remove him and his kind from the earth."

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EVA BEHRING

THE FATE OF AN EXILED WRITER

Norman Manea is one of the last of the "emigrés" from Ceausescu's Romania. Already in his fifties, hesitantly and "much too late," after having left on a tourist visa, he decided finally to remain in the West.

Until 1974, he continued to work as an engineer in the waterworks. But then, due to his growing repute as an author, he joined the Romanian literary union and thereby was assured a modest social security—which, however, also meant intensified state control. His collections of stories *The Night on the Long Side* (1969) and *The First Gates* (1975) were praised by readers and critics alike. His allegorical and shocking novels, among them *Captives, Atrium* and *The Book of the Son*, which were not easily accessible, found an astonishingly broad public that managed to penetrate the complex structure of his works and soon saw in Manea a new type of social-psychological raconteur.

Manea's genre was celebrated as a new artistic intelligence in Romania and, finally, beyond, and he was frequently compared to Robert Musil, Bruno Schulz and Ernesto Sabato. His reputation grew further after Heinrich Böll read in manuscript and highly complimented a German translation of his text. However, Manea's psychological subtleties and refined enciphering were bound to be mistrusted by the cultural commissars, especially since he did not belong to the party and was unwilling to support the government's cultural politics. At the beginning of the 1980s, he provided grounds for a concerted attack when, in an interview in the Transylvanian periodical *Familia* he criticized an (anonymous) scandalous editorial which had appeared in the officially protected cultural publication, *Saptamina* (The Week), for its nationalistic, chauvinistic and antisemitic stance.

From now on press campaigns against Manea became the order of the day. Attacks went in three directions, as "anti-party," "cosmopolitan" and "not indigenous," against Manea the dissident, the open-minded and the Jew. In spite of the solidarity implicit in the reviews and comments of influential literary critics, the consequences for the publication of Manea's new books *On the Contour* (essays, 1984) and *The Black Envelope* (novel, 1984) were dire. The author was designated as *persona non grata*. He had to struggle bitterly with the censors about changes and new formulations for these last books—wrestling between what was required by the officials and what he himself could morally justify.

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It seems a bittersweet irony of a writer's biography that Manea, who for so long functioned under the most unpleasant conditions within a totalitarian regime—subject to actions of discrimination and attempts at expulsion—became one of the most celebrated Romanian authors after five years of exile and that after ten years he is the most published Romanian of his generation in the West. Critics in the West, first in Germany and then in the U.S. and in Europe, perceived him as the most important representative of a national literature at the level of Pasternak, Soltshenitzyn, Sinyavsky, Josef Brodsky and Josef Skvorecky, as an equal to Milan Kundera, Tadeusz Konwicki, Uwe Johnson and Danilo Kis. Manea's works now are printed in nearly every European language and available as well in Israel, Mexico and Argentina.

At first, Manea was especially celebrated in Germany, for stories originating in Romania as well as in America. For instance, "The Trenchcoat", a take-off from Gogol's story, was read as a psycho-thriller, and "Training for Paradise" expanded our insights into Manea's outer as well as inner biography. His most recent publication, *The Black Envelope*, describes the conditions leading to the grotesque fate of the Bucarest former high-school teacher Tolea—a mixture of depth psychology and fantasy. Reviews in German publications focused on his unusual approach, although a definitive assessment, of course, will not be made for years.

In Romania, Manea's positions on uncomfortable questions of the recent past may soon be accepted as necessary insights. After the fall of Ceausescu, however, he is still subject to renewed attacks by the same nationalist media that discriminated against him during the 1980s. After 1990 Manea again proved courageous by trying to deal with historical truth. The Romanian translation of his essay, "Felix Culpa," which originally appeared in the U.S., elicited strong reactions. His sharp analysis of leading Romanian intellectuals leaning to the extreme right in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly Mircea Eliade, and their undistanced support of the national-fascist "Iron Guard" in the following decades, upset the general public, especially Manea's opponents. They still cannot accept the least criticism of Eliade, who by now has been elevated to a national cult figure. Manea's so-called "blasphemies" against right-wing intellectuals led to insults such as "traitor" and "new American," among others, comparable with the Party's attacks on him in the eighties.

From today's perspective, stories and essays seem to be Norman Manea's preferred genres. His fictions, upon close examination, appear to be compositions derived from his experiences. Easily, and without damage to their inner coherence, fragments of his fiction exist on their own and, though puzzling, are fascinating. The author used this method when, for instance, he created the story "The Interrogation" from *The Book of the Son* or when he

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combined various texts in *The Years of Apprenticeship of August the Fool*. The aesthetic impetus for Manea's preferred genre may be found in his love of the modern; maybe that was the *fragment*, as with other writers of his generation, for the revolt against the domination of fiction by the cult of the proletariat, in the 1950s. But without doubt, Manea's life experiences and the bottling up of accumulating fervor against his fate made him remain faithful to these literary forms. Through their content and formal elasticity they gave him the maximum freedom; thought experiments were not strangled by obligations; the wish to generalize was not thwarted by the need for scientific proof; and he dominated aesthetic form.

Manea's *oeuvre* is formed by his obsession with three life experiences, as he stated to the Italian literary historian, Marco Cugno:

> When you discover your Jewishness in a camp at the age of five, your options disappear as you are instantly connected to an ancient collective tragedy. At too early an age, the Holocaust was my first brutal initiation into existence. Later, communist totalitarianism meant not only the banning and reversal of tradition, but also a complicated instruction in what it is to be marginal. Finally, on the threshold of old age, exile returned me to the condition of alien and nomad which I had thought to overcome by rooting myself in the language and culture of the land of my birth.

Deportation and internment, decades of daily deprivations and self-affirmation as a writer in a dictatorship and late exile, offered the "material" for the ever-recurring themes in Manea's literature: holding one's ground against hostile living conditions, the threat of losing one's human dignity, escalation of fear and insecurity, unstoppable corrosion of human relations and feelings of being lost and of giving up. Manea's stories conjure up oppressive feelings of opacity, of black visions and apocalypse as well as pictures of bizarre and ironic detachment. The unsentimental yet constantly felt presence of the author, which never loses itself in self-pitying lament but does not resort to naturalistic observation, furnishes the emotional grounding of this literature, which sometimes may even suggest, paradoxically, a deeply buried optimism glowing above the oppressive panorama of darkness.

The earliest awareness of a child produces the coercive experiences of the story teller—the life created especially for Romanian Jews in a concentration camp in Transnistria by Hitler's faithful dictator, Antonescu. Together with the Jewish population of Bukovina, the Maneas were brought there in October 1941. Many of his stories deal with everyday life in the

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camp and its perverted normality. The boy and his friends play "death" in the way they actually see it: after the shooting, a sudden holding out, rigidity of movement—a sort of charade for them. Fury, shame, disgust, loneliness and fear dominate the child and engender abstruse and secret relations to persons and things. "The Sweater" that belongs to a little girl and is hotly wished for by the boy becomes a fetish of his fight for survival and loses its magic force only when the boy, after a deadly illness, gains renewed strength and courage. Seamlessly Manea joins later experiences of threats under 1950s Stalinism and the decades of life under Ceausescu's increasingly intolerant and aggressive rule to childhood incidents.

Most of all, the peculiar and absurd efforts of the "normal person" to manage under the "everyday terror" of life both in Romania and in exile became an important subject. The explicitly social engagement of Manea's prose, and its implicit political themes, particularly provoked his Romanian opponents in the 1980s. After the postulate of "socialist realism" of the 1950s, the primacy of the aesthetic was accepted with difficulty and counted a decade later as a great accomplishment by courageous writers and critics. During the last decade of Ceausescu's regime, the preeminence of aesthetic values was even officially blessed and became, paradoxically, the normative principle. Nevertheless, all troublesome comments on explosive questions of Romanian society were shoved aside and stigmatized as unworthy of literature.

This argument was to silence Manea as well. His works, however, had too much positive resonance among established critics to fall into that ambiguous category. The experts' testimony effectively showed that Manea's stories with their social-political meaning were still conforming to the requirements of the highest aesthetic norms. From exegeses of his work one could read, with just a bit of knowledge of his background, that he was framing in a linguistically masterful way the most sensitive social-political conditions for the broader sensitive human questions. His ingenious use of "collage" techniques, simultaneity of events and the abrupt "direction of the camera" in the depiction of scenes, is connected by a distinctive pressure of high emotionality, a breathless rhythm of a very personal, original style. Helplessly, the reader is propelled ahead through worlds of a very specific entwining of inner and outer reality. The inner reality, whose discourse moves at breakneck speed from the "I" to the "you" or to the third person, brings forth different times and different ways of appropriating the world. Discreetly interwoven, imaginary figures often disclose the author's ironic judgements, which, at times, can reach into the parodic and yet, in whatever form, unerring recognitions of the human condition. The outer "spectacle," "scenery," "dramaturgy" or even "fairy tale," becomes in the protagonist's view the "actor and viewer all in one" and, eventually, the deformed lines of a grotesque reality. The references and allusions to the "I" character as Manea's differentiated persona in his stories and

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novels often allows for reading these as *Bildungsromane*. In the 1970s, he himself called many of his short stories and novels "variants to a self-portrait."

In his essays as well, Manea plays on his experience of totalitarianism as literary theme: as symbol and distortion of reality, the relationship between artist and dictator which, in his recent work, has ever more sharply broken former taboos.

"Are tyrants and the suppressed masses truly irreconcilable in every respect, or is it a matter of unconscious reciprocal stimulation?" This is a central question for Manea, one that is valid with respect to artists and authors. Norman Manea belongs to those writers of the former East who had to pay a double price, first by holding out against tyranny and later by discovering the conflicts, contradictions and frustrations of freedom, the meaning of controversy and separation after exile in democratic society. In gripping images, he portrays the most sensitive aspect of the exile's self-understanding, his creativity. In one of his first texts written in exile, "Training for Paradise," he states: "To impose silence, layer upon layer. Thin, as thin as glass and heavy as granite. . .The darkness grows, soft and heavy, layer upon layer...Foreign word. A lost language." A draft of the new future.

Manea describes the early days of his American exile with its loss of everyday language and all its consequences as a second holocaust, feelings of forced deracination and intensified risk and insecurity. The writer's block in the foreign country seemed insurmountable. But Manea soon learned to use the clarifying and cathartic functions of writing again in his latest essayistic work. He experiences writing as "sickness and therapy at once," as "fortune within misfortune," as "a felicitous misery."

Norman Manea is one of the most stimulating thinkers and debaters of the meaning and existence of the exiled. His intellectual responsibility and curiosity, his powerful ability to generalize, his literary talent and his inalienable humanistic ethos are his tools. In a sense he has been and remains an unimpeachable moralist, whose intellectual control of an extremely sensitive and strong emotionality keeps him from moralizing. Despite his many biographical encounters with irrationality and the dark absurd, he seems ready to recognize and describe it but not to accept it as an unavoidable moral emptiness.

When asked for the basis of his continuing "search for coherence," he answered that it stands as the sign for the unacceptability of the absurd, of "absurdity as such," the oppressive and ubiquitous absurdity which he recognizes and still is not entirely ready to accept.

Translated from the German by Edith Kurzweil

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KAREN WILKIN

At the Galleries

Helen Frankenthaler tells a wonderful story about her grandmother, a pragmatic, no-nonsense type. Hearing that Helen and her sisters were requesting new bathing suits, their grandmother was skeptical. "What do they need them for?" she asked. "June, July, August, and the summer's over." A lot of summer exhibitions seem put together on that principle, but happily, this past season, there were some conspicuous exceptions—shows that would have held their own at any time. They covered the spectrum from modernist masters to young contemporaries, from an establishment extravaganza to an ambitious transformation of an "alternative site." And more.

Joaquin Torres-García 1899-1949 at Jan Krugier Gallery was not, strictly speaking, a summer show since it began in the spring, but it was reason enough to brave 57th Street even during the worst of the July heat wave. Of course, almost any substantial number of Torres-García's pictures would be worth seeking out, since his work is seldom seen in this country, but the Krugier show was altogether first rate. Drawn from the artist's estate, it spanned most of his career, from a couple of surprising Art Nouveau-influenced drawings from his early years to a splendid group of the gridded cityscapes and constructions on which his reputation rests; the show even included some of his painted wooden toys, like playful Cubist sculptures or fragments of his urban constructions.

Although not installed chronologically, the exhibition provided a kind of crash course in Torres-García's formation and in the guiding principles of his mature works. If you knew something of his history, you could even follow his travels. It's a complicated story. Born in Uruguay in 1874, Torres-García moved back to Spain with his family as an adolescent and spent most of his adult life in Europe, mostly in France and Italy—except for two years in New York in the 1920s—before returning to Uruguay, aged 60, in 1934; he died there in 1949. In Paris he was part of Ozenfant's circle and a founder of the influential magazine, *Cercle et Carré*, connections with European modernism that he retained even after returning to Uruguay. In Montevideo, he established the Taller Torres-García, a sort of fusion of the Bauhaus and the Arts and Crafts Movement, with archaic underpinnings. (The Taller and its influence were examined in an interesting traveling exhibition, seen here at the Bronx Museum of the Arts about three years ago.) Torres-García also had provocative connections with North

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American modernists. He exhibited with Stuart Davis at the Whitney Studio Club in the 1920s, while reproductions of his works in magazines and a marvelous painting in the Gallatin Collection seem to have resonated with both Gottlieb and David Smith early in their mature careers.

What remains constant throughout Torres-García's work is its assertion of an underlying geometric order and its lexicon of pared-down images, ranging from the descriptive to the symbolic, distilled equally from perceptions of everyday urban life—boats, trains, buildings, cars—and from abstract concepts such as time and love. What remains constant too is a mood of restraint, of reduction to essentials, manifest in a subdued, earthy palette, a firm but slightly scratchy line, and that omnipresent forthright grid.

In the exhibited works, Torres-García's mastery of a Cubist idiom was evident in a loose, elegant 1917 collage deploying mattress ticking and a label from Maggi bouillon *en cubitos*. His later preoccupations were plain in works such as *Hoy*, 1921, a wonderful picture composed of collaged Barcelona tram tickets, painted semaphore flags, the flags of the U.S., Italy, and France, an alphabet, calendar pages, and a clock face, not to mention part of an envelope mailed from Puerto Rico in 1918 and an enigmatic scrap of paper stamped "opened by censor." *Hoy* is like a chart of the artist's travels; its delicate, staccato drawing reading as both pure line and a diagram of Atlantic crossings. *Tradición del Hombre Abstract*, made in Uruguay in 1941, is both a handsome, expressive picture and a manifesto of Torres-García's aesthetic: his unshakeable belief that all art, whether ancient or modern, sophisticated or naive, was rooted in harmonious, geometric, *abstract* relationships; his affection for humble materials; his love of signs, invented alphabets, and symbols. Drawn in pencil and ink on wood, the picture is an aesthetic time line, a genealogy of Torres-García's principal sources and influences, presented as one of his elegantly proportioned, frontal, geometric scaffolds. Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance are cited, along with Pythagoras, Christ, El Greco, Bach, and Beethoven; beneath it all is a zone marked "Prehistory;" throughout, Torres-García's personal symbols—fish, arrows, pentagrams, invented alphabets—are threaded into the grid. At once an evocative palimpsest and a brilliant graphic design, this odd picture also reads as a weathered artifact of urban life, a record of an ancient civilization that, startlingly, turns out to be our own recent past.

Good as the show at Jan Krugier was, the selection, by its very nature, was slightly erratic. It would be exciting to see a coherent study of this engaging painter's work. There was a retrospective at the Guggenheim more than twenty-five years ago. Isn't it time for another one?

It's not altogether far-fetched to describe *Lightwater: Sourdre*, Bertrand Ivanoff's monumental installation in a derelict warehouse at Staten Island's Bay Street Landing, as a post-modernist reincarnation of some of the spirit of

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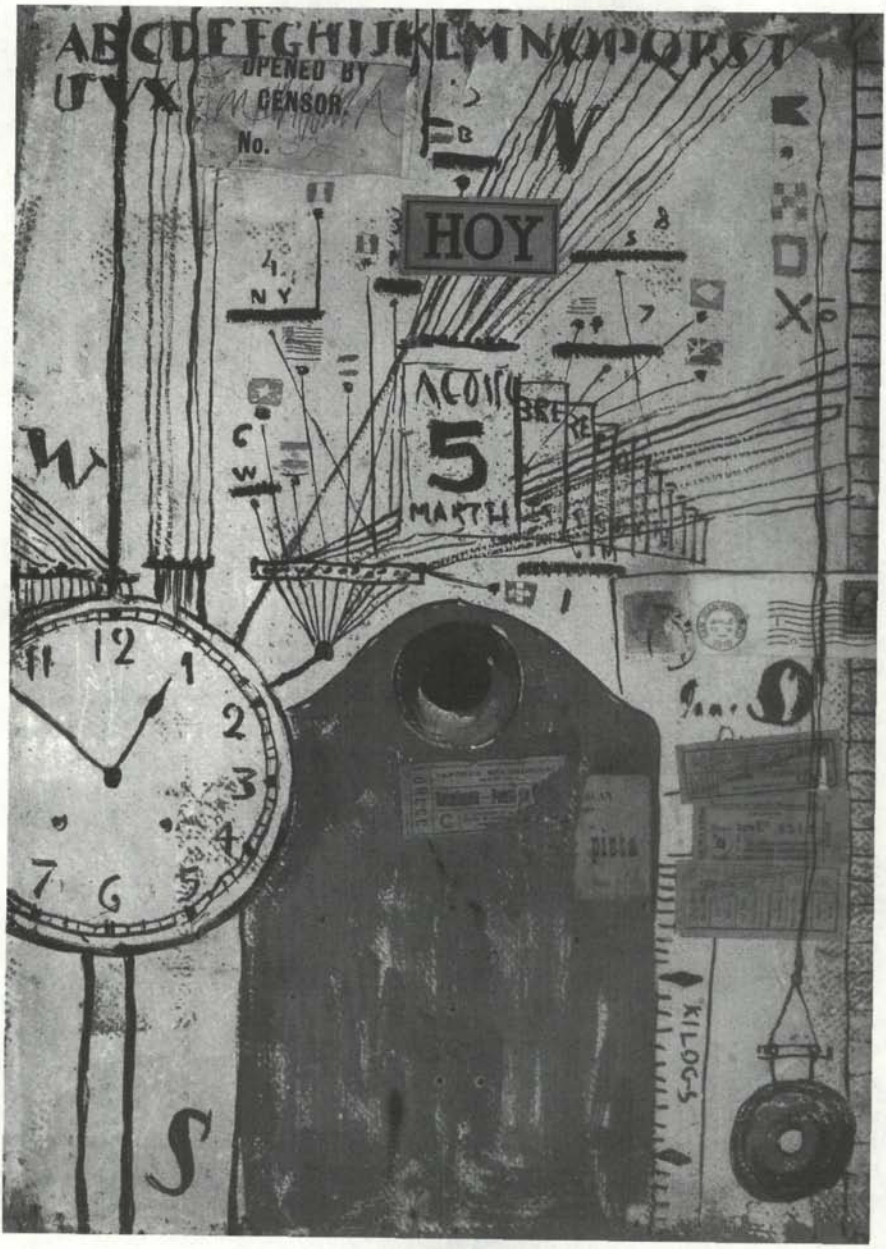

Hoy (1921) by Joaquin Torres-García. Collage and tempera on board. 20 5/8 inches by 14 3/4 inches. Courtesy of Jan Krugier Gallery.

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Torres-García's work. Like Torres-García, Ivanoff, a French artist who has been working in New York for several years, works with vernacular materials to reveal the poetry and underlying order of ordinary things. He has been concerned with water and light for some time, using these unstable components to transform "neutral" urban places, usually spaces chosen for their banality and their lack of personal associations. In *Lightwater*, Ivanoff has inserted an ephemeral architecture of falling water into a rather grim six story concrete building. The interior becomes a vast three dimensional grid of columns and delicate walls of water that punctuate dim spaces, framed by rectangular openings often lacking their windows. "Bringing a live skin into a dead space," Ivanoff calls it.

When you climb to the top floor, the simplicity of the system is revealed: a grid of white PVC pipes and a recirculating pump; gravity does the rest. Elsewhere, it is magical. Fragile walls of water drip through perforations Ivanoff has made through the floors, redefining the interior spaces, diffusing and reflecting light as the drips splash and puddle. The sounds, the density of the flow, the pattern of splashes, and the character of the space are different on each level. It's mysterious, musical, and cool, like a Renaissance grotto, but still unequivocally industrial. The dripping, in the barebones warehouse setting, has powerful associations with nature, whittling away at the manmade environment and, at the same time, with everyday disaster—the leaking pipe, the damaged building. Even the smell of water in the dimly lit spaces simultaneously evokes both the natural world and urban decay. Through the windows, derelict piers, the useful chaos of New York harbor, and the tang of salt air all help to expand the metaphor.

In the winter of 1995, Ivanoff transformed a gloomy basement in Marseille into a ravishing "mirror room" by dividing the walls horizontally into two subtly differentiated zones of color and texture, separated by a continuous glowing band of white neon; the floor was an expanse of still, dark water. It's still my favorite Ivanoff, to date—*un bijou*, the artist calls it—but *Lightwater* comes a close second.

Ivanoff also had a couple of small works dealing with related concepts tucked into a sort of leftover niche at Soho's Painting Center in a recent group exhibition, *The French Connection I*. The show brought together works by young French artists associated with Triangle/France, an offshoot of Triangle, the international artists' workshop founded by the British sculptor Anthony Caro in 1982. Neither school nor colony, Triangle brings together annually professional painters, sculptors, and installation artists from all over the world for an intense two weeks of full throttle art-making, discussion, exchange, provocation, and growth. Things *happen* in this accelerated chunk of time, so much so that the workshop has been compared to a hothouse or a pressure cooker.

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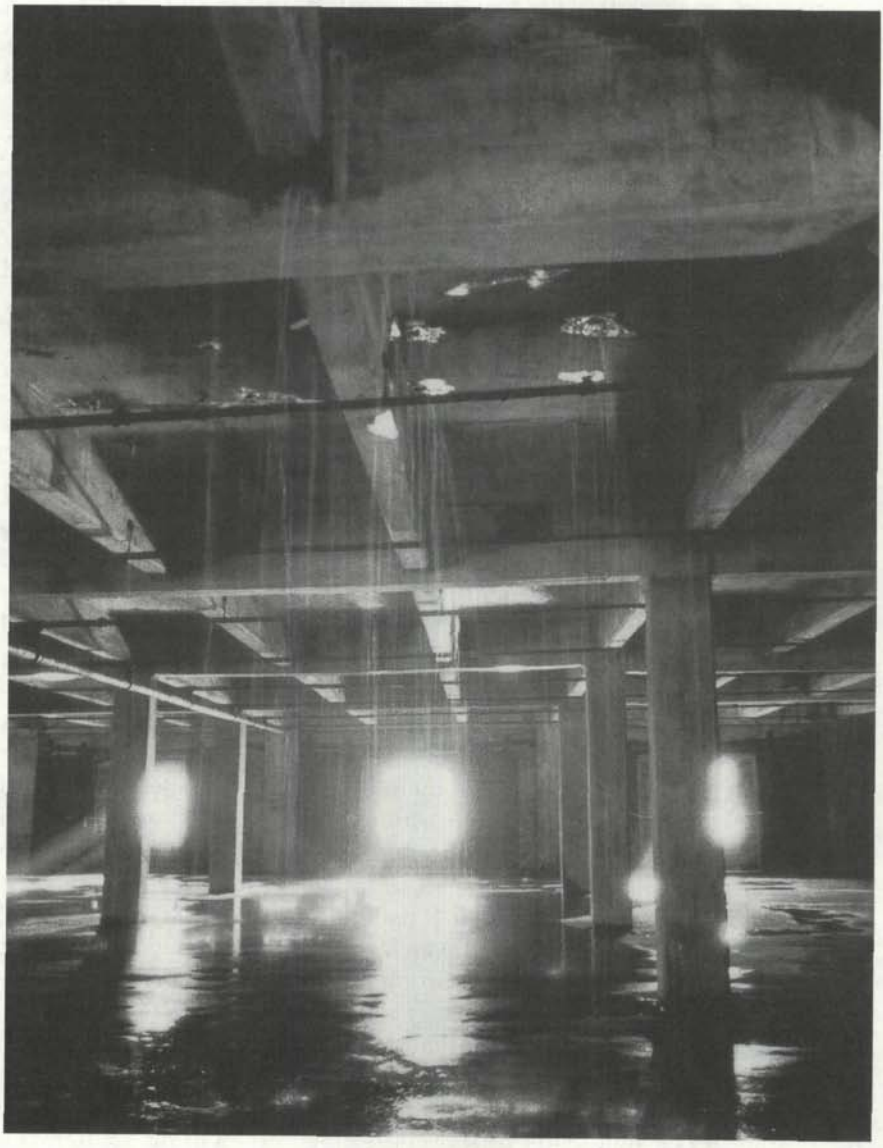

Lightwater: Sourdre (1997) by Bertrand Ivanoff. Installation at Bay St. Landing, Staten Island, N.Y. Photograph by Bertrand Ivanoff.

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Triangle/France, the 1995 session, took place near Marseille. Soon after, through the formidable persuasiveness of its director, the organization obtained studio spaces in a former tobacco factory not far from the center of this energetic port city. *The French Connection I* was an extremely diverse selection of work by French alumni of the 1995 session, plus French artists invited to use the studios. It included everything from ambitious abstract paintings to intimate realist works to sculpture in steel to constructions in paper to video and photo-based installations.

Some of the artists, Valérie Bourdel, Sylvie Réno, and Guy Limone, had shown work earlier in New York at La Galerie du Tableau, the tiny Marseille exhibition space replicated in a Chelsea warehouse this spring. Attentive viewers would recognize Bourdel's moody little landscape forms, buildings, cars and the like, or discern Réno's material of choice— corrugated cardboard—in her witty boxed-for-transport scale models of the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building. (The Tower was delightful; the Empire State Building would have benefitted from further research, but I am told that after her recent stay here, Réno is now tackling the Chrysler Building.) Limone showed two "artifacts" of the workshop, long strips of colored film images of the participants at work and the setting, chosen primarily for their hues, set edge to edge, without the usual frames, and mounted on neon tubes. From a distance, the strips read simply as color; a closer view revealed them as tiny, fragmented glimpses of reality, with references to deep space and vast amounts of unseen detail. The effect was curious, since even when you had identified the colored strips as potentially legible images, they still declared themselves more strongly as color and pattern than as what is called "information" these days. Yet once they had been recognized as images of actuality, they provoked questions about the whole nature of illusionistic art.

Other notable works included Jean-François Coadou's chunky steel constructions, at once like miniature architecture, uningratiating furniture, and insistent barriers, and Hanibal Srouji's atmospheric diptych, an unignorable, confrontational presence, albeit a delicate one, made of evanescent, rhythmically repeated patches of thinned-out earthy color. I was charmed by the installation made by Franck and Olivier Turpin, identical twin brothers who collaborate on videos that replicate home movies made by their father when they were small children. At the Painting Center, you could watch the Turpins, aged about four, going to bed in matching blue-painted nursery cots, wearing neatly buttoned-up all-in-one sleepers with feet. And you could watch the Turpins, aged about twenty-five, in adult-sized versions of the same pajamas, going to bed in adult-sized, blue-painted cots, uncannily making exactly the same gestures and imitating the expressions of their earlier selves. The video monitors displaying

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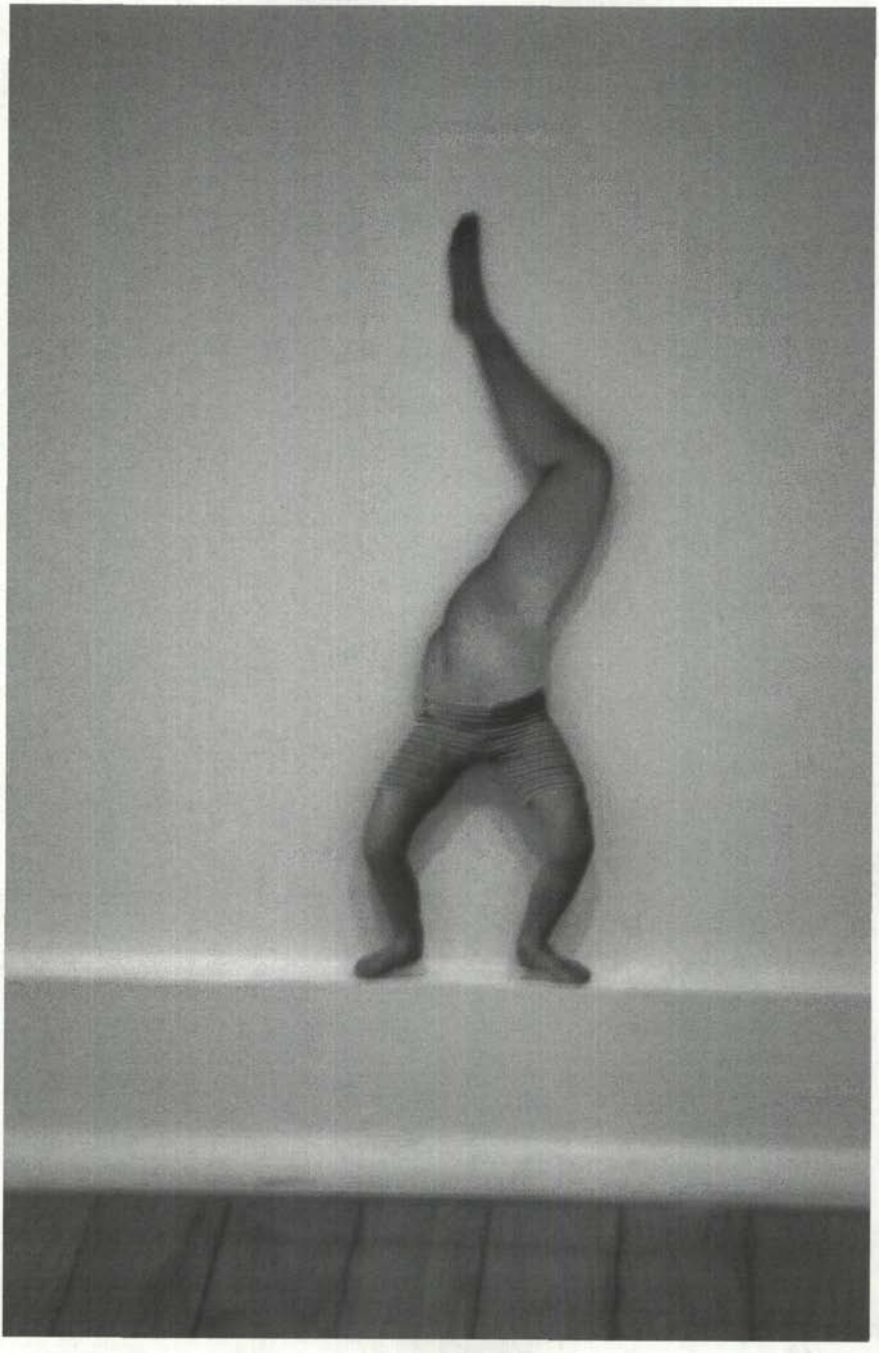

Detail of *Constellation* by W. DuPont. Format variable. From "The French Connection I." Courtesy of Alun Williams.

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these images were set side by side, each in an oversized blue-painted bed, as the boys were in the films, each nestled against an embroidered pillow, the blanket pulled up cozily. It was both solemn and hilarious.

Srouji's lyrical, disturbing diptych, along with some of the other pictures in *The French Connection I*, offered reassuring evidence that serious, unironic, deeply-felt painting still has accomplished practitioners, but if you had any doubts, further corroboration was provided by John Adams Greifen's show of recent works at Salander-O'Reilly Galleries. Greifen's gritty, gestural paintings have clear affinities with Olitski's, but the resemblance has more to do with shared assumptions about what a painting can be than with a desire to emulate. Like Olitski, Griefen is convinced that a picture need not refer overtly to anything but itself—specifically to the history of its making—but he is equally convinced that the maker's deepest emotions and most deeply held beliefs will somehow remain legible in the traces of that history. Which is not to say that Griefen is not knowledgeable about art of the past. Far from it. I suspect, in fact, that he thinks far more about Rembrandt and Titian than he does about Olitski.

Griefen's best pictures seem to happen while you watch, as though you were confronted by a breaking wave or—more accurately—a lava flow of dense pigment. Time seems momentarily suspended by his overscaled gestures, so that the pictures seem at the same time disembodied and sculptural. The most convincing paintings in the show seemed to me the most straightforward, apparently the most direct, as though the painter had effortlessly stroked his thick pigment into an expressive configuration tensely related to the edges of the canvas. But they also seemed willful, charged, insistent. I was sometimes troubled by the deadpan matteness of Griefen's surfaces, which can verge on opacity and inertness, but the sheer conviction of his pictures, the pervasive sense of his passionate love for both the raw materials and the process of painting comes through, enlivening even the dryest of surfaces. What was most impressive to me, in the end, was the downright *feltness* of these paintings, their air of absolutely everything's having been wholeheartedly meant. I may not have liked everything in his show equally well, but it was plain that each picture was the result of an individual quest for intensity and momentary resolution, not the result of applying a formula or "strategy." It's depressing to think that this needs noting, but these are frequently rare commodities in an era when a great deal of art that is taken seriously comes with built-in disclaimers. Griefen's evident pursuit of that much-questioned quality, excellence, with sincerity and without words, is radical these days.

A poignant reminder of a time—not that long ago—when such aspirations were not extraordinary was the exhibition at Tibor de Nagy Gallery of selections from the Roland F. Pease Collection, most of them

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Venus and Adonis (After Rubens) (1952) by Grace Hartigan. Oil on canvas. 40 inches by 40 inches. Courtesy of Tibor de Nagy Gallery.

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acquired from de Nagy in its early days. At once a celebration of the friendship that developed over the years between the legendary dealer and his client, the show was also a tribute to the gallery itself, a miniature review of some of the distinguished artists who exhibited there at the start of their careers.

Most of Pease's acquisitions were modest, intimate, domestic in scale, but otherwise, his collection—like de Nagy's stable—was engagingly eclectic, ranging from geometric abstraction to domestic naturalism. He owned, for example, a warm, dreamy 1952 Helen Frankenthaler, a muscular early Grace Hartigan, an oddball 1962 Robert Goodnough, a raunchy late fifties Larry Rivers drawing, and a couple of nervy 1971 Stanley Boxers, most notably a warm grey canvas with a purple edge and scratchy vertical drawing. Pease made unexpected acquisitions as well, such as a delectable tiny Ron Gorchov of 1960, a packed arrangement of rosy pinks and crisp blue and white bands, and a four-square, unpainted Peter Reginato sculpture of 1971, far more rigorous and austere than his more recent polychromed pieces. The largest work in the show is Pease's 1971 Kenneth Noland "Plaid," a radiant, narrow vertical canvas from a series in which this sublime colorist paid equal tribute to Mondrian and Matisse in works that were unmistakeably Nolands. The best of Pease's figurative works are probably his radiant little Jane Freilicher watercolor landscape and his Fairfield Porters, one broadly handled suburban scene dominated by a sturdy tree, the other—earlier—a cool, vigorously painted view of sea and shore, all pearly greys and murky mauves.

In the late fifties, Pease commissioned Porter to paint his portrait, apparently because de Nagy told him that the painter needed money. The result is curiously cautious and tight—a pencil sketch for the painting is far more energetic and lively—as though Porter had been afraid of displeasing his patron. The lower part of Pease's face seems to have given Porter special trouble. It seems oddly formless, quite unlike the clear features of the man shown in a photograph of Tibor de Nagy and his client, de Nagy with his signature cigarette. Like all of Porter's pictures, the portrait improves on longer acquaintance, when its firm structure and subtle, inventive color harmonies assert themselves, but even then, it is increasingly clear that the bowl of flowers and the Persian rug are more vigorously painted than the figure. Still, a personality emerges. Pease looks shy, amiable, a little withdrawn—the sort of man you might expect to surround himself with intimate, serious, lovingly painted pictures.

"Intimate, serious, and lovingly painted" are terms that could easily be applied to most of the works in the first half of the Museum of Modern Art's summer spectacular, *Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life*. More about the second half later. This ambitious exhibition, organized by Margit

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Rowell, is at times dazzling, at times irritating, at times downright perverse. The first work on view is the Metropolitan's sublime Cézanne, *Still Life with Eggplants*, with its ginger pot, its tipped plate of fruit, its rucked cloth, and its strangely small straw-bound wine bottle, and from there until the mid-point, the exhibition is a curator's wish-list of superb, often recherché examples of still life, broadly interpreted, in the twentieth century. The Matisses alone, a spectacular selection from MOMA's own holdings and many other private and public collections, are worth the trip, and the Picassos and Mirós don't lag far behind. There are wonderful surprises, such as a little 1912 Derain of rock-solid pears and bananas, clearly indebted to Picasso, but a terrific picture nonetheless, and a pair of tough, juicy Max Beckmanns, including one with tipped candlesticks that is positively monumental. There are exhilarating comparisons, such as the stellar grouping of Picasso's sheet metal *Guitar*, 1912–13, his polychrome *Absinthe Glass*, 1914, and that celebrated construction, now in the Tate Gallery, *Still Life with Ball Fringe*, 1914—the holy grails of modernist sculpture in a single display case!

There are also incomprehensible omissions. How is it possible, for example, to mount an exhibition dealing with the modern still life with only one Giorgio Morandi—a less than wonderful Metaphysical painting, at that? (Apart from the fact that the picture is not a first-rate example of what Morandi was capable of, at any time, his flirtation with Metaphysical painting lasted only a couple of years in a career that spanned nearly half a century.) Why were late Braque and Klee slighted and late Guston given such short shrift? Why was Stuart Davis represented only by a single painting from the 1920s and none of his razzle-dazzle mature "unstill lifes"? How could anyone ignore David Smith's astonishing workbench *guéridons*? And so on. Yet, puzzling as these exclusions may be, the generally high level of much of the first half of the show and the intelligence of many of the comparisons make up for a lot. The second part of the exhibition, however, is another matter.

Here many of the inclusions (and omissions) are truly inexplicable. Admittedly, it's confusing territory. The boundaries between depicting objects and using them as points of departure for formal explorations, between using real objects literally and incorporating fragments of actuality to refer to something else have eroded completely in the past twenty-five or thirty years. But a great many of the works in the second half of the show seem to be there simply to ensure the presence of a currently fashionable name. (That's the kindest thing to be said about a lumpen Baselitz.) Not that the first part of the show is exempt from this sort of thing; witness a banal Frida Kahlo of prickly pears. There are exceptions —less sought-after artists whose work offers serious or playful comments

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on the nature of still life. I was glad to see, in this category, one of Domenico Gnoli's wry meditations on unseen presences, a painting of an empty table entitled *Without a Still Life*. In the context of *Objects of Desire*, however, the picture becomes oddly literal, detached as it is from the context of Gnoli's continuing exploration of the implications of empty shirts, sleepers hidden under bedclothes, and the like. But where was William Bailey, while we're at it?

On the whole, *Objects of Desire* is more to be savored for individual works than for the thesis it proposes, although Rowell certainly raises absorbing questions about the changing meaning of still life over the course of this century. She also raises other questions—unintentionally. The show ends with a fairly hit or miss group of works by such current stars as Robert Gober, who provides an oversized Kleenex box pierced by a large tube. What they have in common is literalness and gigantism, which makes you ask whether simply making a functional object so enormous that it ceases to function is enough to turn it into art. Assuming that anything can be art, the question remains as to whether the result is any good. Does immensity guarantee aesthetic significance? I'm not certain that repeat visits to *Objects of Desire* would help to resolve the question. It is, however, the only museum exhibition I've ever seen with a catering credit—Glorious Food is listed as supplying the fruit and vegetables that provide notes of color on Mario Merz's spiral glass table.

June, July, August, and the summer's over, but at least one excellent summer show will be up until November: *The Fields of David Smith*, at the Storm King Art Center. This outdoor installation of seldom-seen large scale works evokes, without trying to replicate, the celebrated sculpture-filled fields surrounding Smith's upstate New York studio. Smaller works, drawings, and photographs within Storm King's gallery building provide a context. It's not a selection of unequivocal masterpieces—Smith was famously uneven, although always extraordinarily inventive and original—but there are many remarkable sculptures, some of which gain a great deal by being seen with their fellows, in the park-like setting. Smith himself studied his works out of doors for long periods of time; seeing them in daylight, against the hills of Storm King, will sharpen even the most dedicated Smith-watcher's understanding of his intentions and his process. Not to be missed.

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The Inimitable Bruno Bettelheim

THE CREATION OF DR. BETTELHEIM: A BIOGRAPHY OF BRUNO BETTELHEIM. By Richard Pollak. Simon & Schuster. $30.00

Did Bruno Bettelheim "create an ex-post-facto intellectual scaffolding to rationalize a life of dissembling," as his biographer Richard Pollak wonders, and if so, why did he not, as he himself had written, "admit [his] failures and state the truth to redeem [himself]"? The short answer, I believe, is that he was an inordinately successful dissembler, that his white lies made him famous, and that once embarked on his career it would have been foolish to back down. And Bettelheim was anything but a fool. He invented past experiences to land the jobs he desired after arriving in the U.S., and then improvised to go on to bigger and better things. He pontificated about his experiences in the concentration camps and soon was quoted as an expert on "surviving." Although he was not the only former Viennese to have done so, he probably was the only one who turned his biography-cum-fiction into distinguished professorships, honorary degrees, and worldwide acclaim.

In 1967, Richard Pollak went to meet Bruno Bettelheim, then the celebrated director of the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago, to find out more about his brother, Stephen's, death while he had been a resident about two decades before. He was puzzled by Bettelheim's defensive stance—the depiction of his mother as a villain, of his father as ineffectual, and his certainty that his brother's thirty-foot drop into the shute of a haystack had been a suicide. "What *is it* about these Jewish mothers, Mr. Pollak?" Bettelheim asked, stunning his interlocutor by the ferocity of his antagonism so many years later. This interview eventually induced Pollak to write his excellent, and even-handed, biography of the willful yet charming man whose lies in truth and truth in lies were germane to his whole being.

Self-hating Jews grew like mushrooms in Bettelheim's Vienna, and many among them inflated their previous accomplishments and schooling after arriving in America because they needed to work. In fact, the refugees who congregated at the Eclair on New York's 72nd Street in the early 1940s used to joke about the fiddlers who now claimed to have played with the Vienna Philharmonic, or even to have conducted at the *Staatsoper*, about the shop owners who now reminisced about their department stores; and about the bank employees who puffed themselves up into bankers. Nevertheless, the newcomers' recent escape, their fear for their relatives' lives, their drop from bourgeois comfort into poverty, and the scramble for unskilled jobs while

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learning English, solidarized them. They all perceived lying to land a job as a necessity. Refugee advice to recent arrivals went something like this: if you don't understand what a prospective employer tells you, just say yes; if you have never done whatever chore he wants you to do, say you've had experience and watch what the worker next to you is doing; and even if you're fired at the end of the day, you'll have learned something and will be ahead by a few dollars. Just keep improvising. Since former credentials could not easily be verified due to the Nazis' rule and the war, Bettelheim could claim that his Doctorate in Humanities was in psychology.

I'm sure that Bettelheim could not have escaped receiving such advice since, unlike his cousin, Edith Buxbaum, who was a doctor and a psychoanalyst, and could pursue her profession after passing the State Boards, he had to construct his own variant of this "advice to refugees." Bettelheim's release from the camps at Dachau and Buchenwald had been arranged with the help of the Emergency Relief Committee. Buxbaum had enlisted the distinguished psychoanalyst Lawrence Kubie to intervene with the American State Department on his behalf. This stroke of luck allowed him to parlay what he had gleaned from books, and from his fairly short personal psychoanalysis with Richard Sterba, one of Freud's disciples, into a psychoanalytic background. At the end of 1939, few persons had been able to escape almost directly from the camps to the U.S., and psychoanalytic theory was still most unsophisticated. Thus Bettelheim's psychoanalyzing of camp inmates was taken at face value.

Essentially, he claimed to have been released because he had asserted himself against his jailers who, in turn, came to respect him for his courage. However, as many of us knew long ago, as Ernst Federn, his best friend at the Buchenwald camp reported, and as Pollak further documents, he was as miserable there as everyone else but had the luck to receive money from his mother which allowed him to bribe some of the guards. Thereby, he first managed to get out of the most onerous tasks, then to be freed, and ultimately to avail himself of the Emergency Committee's affidavit. Had he, like the few others who had been let go, ascribed being rescued to inordinate luck, no one would have taken offense. However, he transformed his privileged flight into a pseudo-Freudian psychological theory, holding that if only Jews had been more assertive, and had actively fought their oppressors, they might have gotten the Nazis to treat them more humanely.

As we know, when he advanced this preposterous claim in print, it attracted the wrath of a large part of the refugee community, since he overlooked the fact that in 1939 the machinery of death was not yet in place. But because his focus was on the individual, the Harvard psychologist Gordon W. Allport accepted "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations" (1943) for publication—which by then had been rejected by other editors

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because it was based on unverifiable data. In that essay, he did not credit Anna Freud's and Sandor Ferenzci's theories, when he observed that prisoners tended to defend themselves against their aggressors by identifying with them. They had been exploring this notion shortly before the *Anschluss*. Intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt, Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, who also tried to explain the Nazis' success in terms of individuals' attitudes, though disagreeing with one another's philosophical premises, and with some of Bettelheim's claims and his hyperbole, nevertheless engaged with him in public debates, and soon invited him to contribute to a volume on National Socialism; Dwight Madonald excerpted "Extreme Situations" for *Politics;* and he was favorably quoted in *Commentary.* All of that catapulted Bettelheim into the spotlight, and captivated the media.

When Bettelheim arrived in New York and later in Chicago, none of the Viennese psychoanalysts as yet had made a name for him- or herself, although the American ambience was ready for them. Bettelheim took advantage of this cultural climate and, not least, of his ability to fabulate. Indeed, by employing the Freudian categories, he could kill two birds: establish his professional credentials by means of psychoanalytic language; and bolster his allegations and claims that he had been close to Freud—whom he had never met. Again, who in America could prove that this wasn't true, and who really cared?

Actually, his first wife, Gina, had taken an (American) autistic child into their Viennese home, and Bettelheim inevitably gained much insight into this girl's, Patsy Lyne's, psyche. To further establish his psychoanalytic credentials as a follower of Freud's, and land a job in a psychological setting, he now boosted his accomplishments by saying that he himself had cared for her. (By the time he wrote *The Informed Heart,* in 1960, he maintained that he had lived with two autistic children in Vienna as part of their treatment, and based subsequent stories on that one.) This "Viennese *Schmäh*" established him as an authority on autism which, at that time, was neither well-defined nor an accepted diagnostic category. His lively personality and extraordinary intelligence, along with his ability to grab the limelight, his powers of persuasion and skill at listening, landed him his first appointment at the Orthogenic School.

Certainly, Bettelheim was hiding more than his lack of credentials. He was trying to fake his past, most of all, to account for the twelve years he had been in the lumber business—which he had had to take over after his father died of syphilis. While waiting for the boom to fall, the young Bruno had been traumatized, especially because he did not know whether the sickness (then leading to certain death) had been contracted before or after he was conceived, so that he might have inherited it. Inevitably, the atmosphere at home was oppressive, and he preferred spending time with his aunt and cousins, the Buxbaums. Moreover, he was painfully aware of being physically

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unattractive, given his small stature, bulging nose and bespectacled eyes. Like every insecure teenager, he tended to lose himself in books. In the end, at Gina's urging, he returned to the University of Vienna to take a Doctorate in Humanities at the age of 35—in June 1938, a few months after the *Anschluss*.

Throughout his book, Pollak keeps coming back to Bettelheim's various bouts of depression which were due to these early experiences. Although Bettelheim was in the habit of explaining everyone else's symptoms via psychoanalysis, that was not how he dealt with his own malaise. It is not even clear whether his analysis with Sterba for depression was in 1929, as he asserted at least once, or around 1936, as Gina, the most knowledgeable witness, recalls. She said that it was for at most a year, whereas he claimed that it was for "at least two years." Still, how could he admit that he was nearly unanalyzed while being extolled as one of the most prestigious psychotherapists, not necessarily by the profession, but in the public realm. Did he fear that if the media were to find out that he was in treatment his house of cards might collapse, that the prince would revert to being the frog? Thorough self-knowledge, however, is the bedrock of a psychoanalyst's work, its inner core. Yet Bettelheim did not take seriously Kurt Eissler's advice that no one should run a school for emotionally disturbed children without having been fully analysed. This lack, I believe, was responsible for the authoritarian stance Bettelheim took towards the families of his wards, for his unrelenting insistence that parents be kept away from their children after they were entrusted to him, for telling Pollak that his father was a "schlemiel" who stayed away from emotions and that his mother paraded as a saint and a martyr and didn't accept responsibility for Stephen's "pseudo feeble-mindedness."

According to Pollak, Bettelheim was more antagonistic to mothers, privately and publicly, than other prominent psychotherapists; and he felt a good deal more hostility towards his own mother than he ever recorded or admitted. He was happily married to Trude Weinfeld, after a stormy affair in Vienna—before she emigrated to Australia—and after Gina left him soon after his arrival in America. The marriage to Trude revolved around Bruno, which she apparently didn't mind. I should add that she had been madly in love with him as soon as they met, and that this type of one-sided relationship too was very Viennese. Later on, most of the couple's close friends were refugees, and they included Gina and her husband, Peter Weinmann. But even then, Bettelheim did not stop thinking about himself as the small, ugly Jew, and as an outsider—despite his success and celebrity. As he got older, failing health intensified these emotions, especially after Trude died.

Given all these handicaps, how did Bettelheim manage to surround himself with so many devoted friends and colleagues, and build up the Orthogenic School along with his own reputation if, as transpired increasingly after his death, his castle was erected on a bed of sand and maintained

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by a web of half-truths? Of course, he benefitted from Americans' increasing search for methods to treat emotionally disturbed and delinquent children. Although other experts were advocating treatment rather than custodial care, they were not able to hug the public stage in the way he did. Of course, he was a more inventive writer than most of the others investigating the causes and treatment of autism, and in addition was able to hold on to exceedingly devoted editors who diligently worked on his prose. And after he became the darling of *The New Yorker* there was no keeping him from making a splash with his free associations.

Bettelheim turned himself into an expert on child rearing in the Kibbutz after reviewing Melford Spiro's book on the subject. He criticized this anthropologist's thesis, which was based on a year-long study, as weak and limited, in order to advance his own agenda. Without ever having visited Israel, or a Kibbutz, Bettelheim argued that its children ended up viewing their parents casually and amiably, but with neither love nor respect, and that their parents, in turn, did not miss having their children's emotions centered around them. From this invention he went on to hold that kibbutz education was an "unequivocal success"—at a time when kibbutniks were already ambivalent about it and began keeping their children at home. It does not take much to see that this thesis helped bolster Bettelheim's view that parents were a bad influence on their offspring, and his resolve to keep them away from his own charges at the Orthogenic School.

In 1977, Bettelheim published *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. He claimed that only some psychoanalysts had (too simplistically and dogmatically) addressed the importance of these tales to young children, and that no one had written about the subject. Pollak points out, and documents in detail, that this wasn't true; like the hungry Hansel, Bettelheim helped himself to Julius Heuscher's interpretations—and then failed even to list the book in his bibliography. He concluded that we could learn more about human and societal predicaments from fairy tales than from most other literature, and that children could well handle encounters with wolves and witches, even at bedtime. This book received a National Book Critics' Circle prize and a National Book Award. By then he had retired, and had moved to a dream house in California. But he was not content, and still held on to his sense of inferiority.

Bettelheim made his last big splash in 1982, with a little book he called *Freud and Man's Soul*. It started out as a long piece for *The New Yorker*, pointing out that Freud's texts had been badly translated, had been tailored for American Freudians who had scientized psychoanalysis in order to make it acceptable to the medical profession, and that Strachey's translations had drained Freud's texts of their humanist qualities. Bettelheim offered excellent examples, such as rendering *Fehlleistung* as parapraxis, *Schaulust* (the pleasure of

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looking) as scopophilia, and everyday terms such as *Ich, Es*, and *Über-ich* into ego, id, and superego. But he failed to mention that this issue had been discussed for years by self-respecting psychoanalysts, including Freud and his daughter Anna. As I then speculated in my review of the book, he probably did not think of writing about it until after Anna Freud's death, the year before.

Bettelheim's popularity most certainly enhanced the reputation of the Orthogenic School. However, its achievements unquestionably were due to his staunch commitment, to a dedicated staff made up primarily of young acolytes—for whom he served as a sort of therapist—and to his thorough knowledge of the Freudian canon. Whenever counselors presented him with their questions and anxieties about the children's behavior, or mentioned their own personal upsets, Bettelheim would recall a friend back in Vienna who had had the same kind of problem. This teaching via anecdotes, of course, was not unique to Bettelheim, but his success with this rather loose method led him to invent more and more stories, which he himself ultimately seemed to believe. And he exaggerated the rate of cures, which, in turn, brought him to the attention of educators, psychoanalysts and psychologists, among others. Moreover, by overstating these accomplishments he attracted more and more applicants to the school, which meant that he was able to enroll less disturbed children which, in turn, raised the success rate he could report. As they say, nothing succeeds like success.

Pollak shows that Emmy Sylvester, a Viennese doctor and psychiatrist who had helped Bettelheim write the report that first landed him his job at the school, further eased his ascent by collaborating with him on six journal articles—which ensconced him as an authority on residential treatment. But he credited neither her nor anyone else for this triumph. For example, in *A Home for the Heart* (1974), his tenth book, he maintained that his commitment to saving the children stemmed from his camp experience, from his anger at the idea of wasted lives, whether trapped behind metal or emotional barbed wire. By then, he already had been reviewed in every popular and intellectual publication, and was at the acme of his career.

In every one of his books, as well as in *Time,* on "Good Morning America," in countless interviews, and in professional and popular articles, Bettelheim insisted that in his school all spanking was forbidden, as was hitting, or any other kind of physical abuse of children. He held that a child will learn to stop hitting only by example, and that a therapist must militate against exercising every bit of unwarranted dominance over a patient. The first hint of Bettelheim's bad temper, that he didn't practice what he preached, came in a *New York Times Magazine* profile in 1970. Although one former resident had published a novel about life at the Orthogenic School in the early 1980's, the truth came out only after his suicide, in 1990. Some now stated

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that they had lived in terror of him; others were appalled at revelations of Bettelheim as a brute who preached understanding; and yet others came to his defense, recalling their successful therapy with him, and his utter dedication to at least some of the children. But there is no doubt that Bettelheim swatted quite a few of the youngsters, as Pollak's interviews with many of his graduates confirmed. While insisting that his staff hew to the psychoanalytic approach rather than to operant conditioning, he tyrannized them. "Did he do so because he was convinced that he was the children's superego, that he had to externalize [it] until they could internalize it?" But why, then, did he not make this conviction public? Pollak suggests that he couldn't do so and continue receiving the financial support he needed from government agencies, foundations, and private donors; that parents no longer would have been lulled into trusting him as completely as they did; and that the University of Chicago might have removed the unconditional support his enterprise depended on. In other words, owning up to the whole truth might have brought to naught Bettelheim's life's achievement.

It has been argued that accomodation is a fact of Jewish life even for those who have renounced it—whether or not they may be self-hating. How much more true is this, I wonder, for Viennese refugees whose parents had already abandoned their religion, and who, like Bettelheim, embraced universalist-cum-socialist principles, went hiking with the *Wandervögel*, and who upon arriving in America were expected to fit into the larger culture while being identified with a Jewish community they did not truly understand but could not (and probably did not want to) disavow? It has been argued as well that with the sea change, psychoanalysis accomodated to American exigencies, that Freud's disciples after arriving in the U.S. "scientized" his "art." This is the subject of another debate. However, Bettelheim, by entering the profession entered these debates as well. Thereby, and because of his public visibility, he was more or less fully accepted by at least some of the classical Freudians, and was working with many of them. Still, as more psychologists were admitted to the inner circles of the profession without gaining access to the American and International Psychoanalytic Associations, he too joined in the protests. Of course, by then, he would have forgotten the double-edged irony of *Schmäh,* which in Vienna had been taken for granted. This sort of serious kidding, based mostly on verbal *reparté*, and which assumed that listeners never suspended their disbelief, to some extent had been taken at face value when Bettelheim arrived in Chicago.

Towards the end of his life, Bettelheim acquired many young friends in California, budding psychoanalysts and academics who wanted to know about his thoughts and experiences, and to learn from him. He charmed them all and impressed them by his brilliance. In his last interview, with David James Fisher, he comes across as truly believing some of the stories about himself

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which Pollak's meticulous research found to be untrue. Even so, I would not discount his achievements—which, whether true or false, are part of the story of a man who invented himself and thereby helped a number of autistic children live full lives.

EDITH KURZWEIL

The Myths of Eros

EROS. By Bruce Thornton. Westview Press. $28.00

Sexuality, the French historian Michel Foucault assures us, is "discursively constructed." Humans have sexual impulses derived from nature but how these manifest themselves in social relations is always a product of "discourse" or of the prevailing ideology. Moreover, our underlying nature, Foucault maintains, is nothing as fixed or certain as what we moderns call heterosexuality or homosexuality. Nature made us androgynous creatures but today we accept more limited sexual preferences simply because of the dictates of discourse. In *The Uses of Pleasure* (1984), volume two of his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault says the ancient Greeks were more in tune with their natural instincts. Greek men, Foucault claims, were bisexual and "could, simultaneously or in turn, be enamored of a boy or a girl. To their way of thinking, what made it possible to desire a man or a woman was simply the appetite that nature had implanted in man's heart for 'beautiful' human beings, whatever their sex might be."

This claim has since been taken up by the homosexual liberation movement to argue that those of us who remain exclusively heterosexual are conformists and reactionaries who deny nature and allow ourselves to be blindly led by ideology. According to Jonathan Ned Katz, author of *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (1993), rather than being timeless, the concept of exclusive heterosexuality is an invention of the modern era, specifically of the psychotherapy movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The bisexuality of the ancient Greeks, he concludes *á la* Foucault, indicates our true sexual potential. This claim is supported by no less an authority than Gore Vidal. In his introduction to Katz's book, Vidal describes heterosexuality as a "weird concept of recent origin and terrible consequences."

However, other political movements that have looked to ancient Greece to provide a touchstone for their views have seen it providing a different perspective. Instead of the gay view of the Greeks posing a counter-example to

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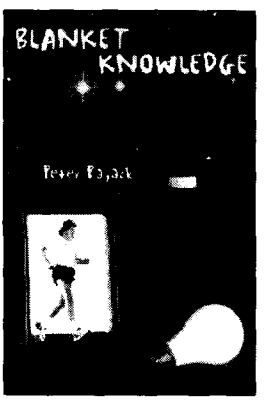

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our own repressive times, radical feminists have seen ancient society itself as the very foundation for the terrible lives that women are supposed to have led ever since. Both Eva Cantarella in *Pandora's Daughters* (1981) and Eva Keuls in *The Reign of the Phallus* (1993), claim Greek women were "locked away in the dark recesses of closed-in homes" and subject to a "phallic ethos" in which they were "deprived of interests and gratifications" and excluded from love "which found its highest expression in relationships between men." Wives were kept at home for breeding purposes while the men went out and enjoyed themselves with prostitutes and boys. Except for current taboos against homosexual pederasty, feminists believe this is the model that has largely prevailed down to our own times.

The Afrocentric movement has also developed its own thesis on the ancients, but this is different again. The Greeks were not the founders of Western civilization: they stole all their ideas from the Africans. Greek culture and scholarship derived from Egypt, Afrocentrists claim, and Egypt itself had its roots deep in the African continent. In particular, according to several Afrocentric writers and academics, Aristotle got all his ideas from that great repository of African knowledge, the library at Alexandria, which the Greeks then subsequently, and characteristically, destroyed. In the hands of some of the more macho Afrocentrists, this perspective acknowledges, but shows little respect for, the gay interpretation. The black American cleric, Reverend Al Sharpton, has declared: "White folks was in the caves while we was building empires...We taught philosophy and astrology [sic] and mathematics before Socrates and them Greek homos ever got around to it."

It is plain that in each of these political theses, relativism rules. Each movement selects from the ancients those pieces of evidence that appear to confirm its prejudices. Unfortunately, the uncommitted bystander is left wallowing in a swamp of mutually incompatible and, in some cases, mutually hostile claims. The only way to extricate himself is to turn to that one creature now equally spurned by all of our contemporary advocacy movements: the traditional historian who tries to look at all the relevant evidence, to see beyond discourse, ideology and racial and sexual politics, to get to the truth of the matter.

In 1996, the proponents of the Afrocentric thesis were engaged by two classical historians, Mary Lefkowitz and her colleague Guy Maclean Rogers. In *Not Out of Africa* and *Black Athena Revisited*, they demolished the Afrocentrist claims. The intellectual precursors of ancient Greece, they demonstrated, were Levantine not African. Aristotle could not have got his ideas from the library at Alexandria since it was not created until 25 years after his death and, anyway, Alexandria at the time was a Greek colony and the library held predominantly Greek manuscripts. Neither Egypt nor Africa was in any sense the mother of Western civilization.

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Now another classics scholar, Bruce Thornton, has come along with a book that provides a proper examination of the meanings the ancient Greeks gave to sex. Thornton's book is titled *Eros: The Myth of Ancient Greek Sexuality*. It is at once a stunning work of scholarship—the most comprehensive and impressive study of its subject yet undertaken—as well as a book that destroys all the pretensions of the prevailing company of sexual radicals. Though an academic, a professor of classics at California State University, Fresno, Thornton has produced an eminently readable and accessible account of the classic texts. Most importantly, he reminds our own romantic era of something the Greeks recognized far more clearly than we do: the dangerous and destructive powers embodied by this force of nature.

Thornton advances his investigation by critically examining the literary remains of ancient Greece to discern their attitudes towards sex. He takes the reader through a grand tour of dramatic tragedy and comedy, poetry, oratory, legend, history and philosophy from the eighth to the first century BC. His emphasis is on what these primary texts say themselves, and he has very little recourse to secondary commentaries, partly because he wants his intended audience, the intelligent but non-specialist reader, to directly confront the Greek mind, but also because so many of the dominant academic interpretations today are accompanied by what he calls "the whine of ideological axes being ground." For those wishing to explore the latter, however, he offers a pungent and incisive critical bibliography at the end of the book.

To the ancient Greeks, Thornton writes, Eros was one of the gods who appears very early in the story of creation. He simply appears out of Chaos, the mysterious chasm filled with darkness. This makes him a force of nature, one of the fundamental building blocks of the cosmos. Thornton shows Eros has a double life in Greek literature: an anthropomorphic god but also the inhuman force of sexual attraction inherent in every living creature. Euripides calls him "this most unconquerable god," this "tyrant of gods and men" since all the gods, including Zeus the king of the gods, must obey him. Though represented as a boy, Eros is by no means innocent or naïve. He is more street kid than cute cupid. His power, moreover, is not confined to the realm of sexuality. He is lust. He represents all desire that is destructively excessive. We still retain some of this meaning today when we speak of the lust for power or the lust for wealth. In the form of sexual desire, Eros is a representation of how sex attacks the mind, something simultaneously out there in nature and inside us.

The Greeks, Thornton shows, saw the destructive powers of sex and violence as two sides of the same irrational coin, "each interpenetrating and intensifying the other, creating a violent sex and sexual violence that exploded into profound destruction and disorder, a double chaotic energy threatening the foundations of human culture and identity." The Greeks' most famous

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war, the expedition against Troy, originates in the seduction of Helen by Paris. The disasters of Homer's *Iliad* also begin with sexual conflict. The quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon starts over two girls and rapidly escalates to a contest over heroic honor. In Sophocles' drama *Electra*, Clytemnestra wants to murder her husband Agamemnon for sacrificing their daughter Iphigeneia, but her revenge is also fuelled by her own illicit affair with Agamemnon's cousin Aegisthus. The Chorus sees it that way, saying "Eros was the killer" and his daughter Electra agrees, ascribing her motive to her uncontrolled sexual appetite. After Clytemnestra kills the girl she boasts that the murder "will give relish" to her sex with Aegisthus, a statement Thornton says demonstrates the Greek understanding of how violence becomes sexualized.

Another of the most revealing works of Greek literature is the *Voyage of the Argo.* In search of the Golden Fleece, Jason and his Argonauts travel to Colchis where they find it in the possession of Aëtes the king. Eros makes Medea, the daughter of Aëtes, fall in love with Jason. She then helps her lover overcome her father's obstacles and together they make their escape with the fleece, returning to Greece as husband and wife. Unlike the romantic version of the story in the twentieth century film, however, the tale told by Apollonius of Rhodes in 250 BC is a bleak one. Medea is portrayed as blinded and deluded by her passion for Jason. She is a traitor to her family who steals its most precious possession and then helps her lover murder her brother Apsyrtus. In one version of the story, Apsyrtus is an infant whom Medea cuts up, throwing the pieces into the sea so that her pursuing father must slow down to pick up the dismembered limbs for proper burial."Wicked Eros," Apollonius wrote, "great plague, great curse to humans, from you come destructive strife and mourning and groans, and countless pains are stirred up by you."

Thornton punctuates his work throughout with contrasts between Greek perceptions of sexuality and what he sees as the comforting but ultimately self-deluding views of the late twentieth century. The ancient world associated Eros not only with violence but with all the destructive natural forces within ourselves that always threaten to overcome civilization: madness, enchantment, disease, mental dissolution, agitation, and drunkenness. "This loss of control frightened the Greeks," Thornton points out, "whereas to our Romantic sensibilities it is what we seek." We want our erotic selves to find fulfilment without hindrance or check.

Thornton is particularly scathing in his comparisons between Greek thought and the sexual liberation theorists of the 1950s and 1960s such as Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse who condemned "civilized morality" and "repressive reason." They claimed the "life instinct" would be served by "erotic exuberance" and that the "liberation of the instincts" would gen-

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erate a new kind of freedom. They created the ideological climate for the sexual revolution of the 1960s and beyond. The Greeks knew better, Thornton argues. They saw sex not as a liberating power but a force with the potential to generate destruction and disorder, a chaotic energy threatening the foundations of human culture and identity. Indeed, they recognized the central problem of human identity as the weakness of our cultural and social orders before the relentless power of the sensual, the instinctive and the irrational.

The Greeks saw sexuality as central to the basic duality of the human condition—natural passions and drives and appetites that cultural order attempts to control and subordinate. However, nature and civilization, he notes, were not diametrically opposed to each other. While the nature of the untamed forests and mountains threatened constantly to encroach on the cultivated space that humans inhabit, there was also the concept of tamed nature, nature domesticated, its life-giving energy subordinated to the human mind and its technologies. The Greeks thought it was not possible to eliminate the world of wild beasts but it could be tamed and domesticated in order to serve civilization. Similarly, sexuality needs to be tamed so its potentially destructive powers, which will always exist, can be redirected to human purposes. This was accomplished in the institution of marriage and by the sexual fidelity of husband and wife. In Greek thought, the civilized human life is defined by marriage and the household where legitimate children are born and reared.

Women are particularly interesting to Greek literature, Thornton argues, because in them this fundamental human problem, this conflict between nature's chaos and culture's order, is magnified. The Greeks thought that women, with their greater emotionalism, their unbridled sexual appetites, their tendency to surrender to their passions, are closer than the male to the chaotic forces of nature, to the earth and the world of beasts. They are more in tune with the forces and cycles of the natural world. To dismiss these attitudes as sexist or misogynist, Thornton writes, is "to purchase a cheap moral authority at the expense of a deeper understanding of the Greek exploration of human identity and its defining contradictions." Through the figure of the goddess Aphrodite, Greek literature fully recognized that the allure of female sexual beauty subjected men to the power of women. Aphrodite's powers render absurd the modern feminist interpretation of Greek women as cowering victims of a misogynistic patriarchy. "This tells us very little about antiquity," Thornton writes, "yet quite a lot about the late twentieth–century politics of victimhood and the liberal–democratic assumption that all power resides in political rights and institutions." Such a view, he says, renders meaningless the figures of Pandora, Helen, Clytemnestra, Medea, Lysistrata—all women whose magnificence depends on a recognition that men are vulnerable to, and hence fear, the sexual power of women.

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Moreover, the notion that women never left the house, and that they were shackled in some Hellenic purdah, is given short shrift by Thornton. Many Greek literary sources offer plenty of evidence that women could and did get outside the house for a variety of reasons. The best known is Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata*, which portrays the women of Athens not only leaving their houses but occupying the Acropolis and organizing with the women of Sparta a boycott of sex with their husbands until both sides cease their military hostilities. Thornton argues that feminist claims about Greek women being confined to the house are a misinterpretation of the fact that the household was the woman's realm, the place where she exercised authority and control over her husband, children and servants.

Thornton also provides little comfort for those lesbian separatists who see the seventh-century poet Sappho as their founding inspiration. He argues that she has been a victim of mischaracterization for 2500 years. Sappho was a wife and mother who wrote *epithalamia* or wedding songs celebrating not lesbian love but the briefly flowering beauty of young women who were themselves about to become wives and mothers. Only one of the poems from her nine books survives intact, but several of her fragments have been translated in the modern era, with the translators filling in the gaps. Many modern readers are unaware the translators are thus essentially writing Sappho's poems for her. Thornton argues that her famous "Hymn to Aphrodite" is not a poem about a mutually sustaining sexual relationship between women but a partly theological, partly philosophical work that attempts to redefine human understanding of the power of the goddess. Though her poetry does sometimes speak of her erotic suffering with desire for a beautiful girl, the only certainty about the claim that Sappho was a lesbian is that she came from the island of Lesbos.

An even greater distortion is evident in modern interpretations about Greek male homosexuality, especially the purported cult of pederasty so widely celebrated by modern gay writers. According to the latter—especially K.J. Dover, David Halperin and Michel Foucault—the Greeks were indifferent to same-sex relations, and indeed considered them perfectly normal. The only restriction was that participants had to observe certain protocols and conventions. In the case of "boy love," the custom was that the boy had to be courted and play hard to get, that his reputation be protected and that he not receive any money. Some of these writers say the boy should not be anally penetrated—the older man was only allowed to rub his penis between the boy's thighs, as depicted in scenes on some ancient Greek vases—but others, such as Eva Cantarella, claim that "anal penetration was normal in pederastic relationships."

Thornton offers two chapters on Greek homosexuality which, hopefully, should demolish these myths once and for all. He shows convincingly that there is no evidence in their literature for the supposition that the Greeks

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viewed the sexual penetration of men and women in the same light. Sex between males was an offense against the laws of hubris and of sexual outrage. The passive homosexual, the male who allowed himself to be anally penetrated, was viewed with "shame" and "outrage." Plato and Xenophon both viewed sex between males as a depravity that all right-thinking men should abhor as much as they would incest. Aristotle saw homosexuality as a deformed condition brought about either by natural disorder or by habit, but something that was decidedly "abnormal." There are homosexual characters in some of Aristophanes' plays but they are associated with corruption and decadence. In *Knights*, Aristophanes is saying that corruption in Athens has reached the stage where the shameless pursuit of all appetites, including active and passive homosexuality, is the most important qualification for a politician.

On the one hand, Thornton argues, the Greek philosophers saw homosexuality as an historical innovation, one that was "contrary to nature," a result of the depraved human imagination and vulnerability to pleasure. On the other hand, dramatists like Euripides saw it as a "product of nature" which those afflicted found hard to control. But even in the latter cases, homosexuality is portrayed as a crime that unleashes destructive forces that overthrow reason and law. For instance, in Euripides' play *Chrysippus*, Laius, the father of Oedipus, kidnaps and rapes the son of Pelops and thereby initiates a chain reaction of erotic disorder culminating in the incest and parricide of Oedipus and the blight of Thebes that destroys the life of humans, herds and crops alike.

How, then, did the myth of Greek bisexuality gain any currency? Partly by misinterpretation of the literary remains, Thornton argues, and partly by selective use of evidence. Foucault's reading, for example, omitted the great volume of classical drama and poetry and was confined to a narrow selection of fourth-century medical and philosophical works. While it is apparently true that there was an aristocratic homosexual tradition, this represented only a tiny elitist minority at any time. The concept of "boy love" is derived from a real tradition in which older aristocratic men did act as educational and social mentors for adolescent youths from other aristocratic families. However, the notion that this relationship involved homosexual intercourse would have been abhorrent to all concerned. It is true there are illustrations on vases depicting homosexual acts between older men and boys, but there is no reason to believe these tell us any more about what was representative in ancient Greece than mail order magazines of child pornography indicate what is normal and accepted in our own times.

Reading Thornton's discussion, it remains possible (perhaps even likely) that Socrates himself had homosexual inclinations, since he speaks of his efforts to overcome his desire for the beautiful youth Alcibiades. Plato

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nonetheless assures us that Socrates did not succumb to this temptation and did not act out his desires. However, the possibility that one of the great thinkers of ancient Greece might have been a closet homosexual tells us nothing about other Greek men of the era, nor about the natural instincts of men at large.The argument by Foucault and Katz—some men in ancient Greece were homosexual, therefore the sexual taste of the human species is androgynous—is not only spurious logic but an insult to the kind of reasoning that Socrates gave his life to sustain.

KEITH WINDSCHUTTLE

Bizarre Odyssey

THE BLACK ENVELOPE. By Norman Manea. Translated by Patrick Camiller. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $25.00.

Fyodor Dostoevsky could hardly have suspected how far reality would outstrip his parody of nihilist and socialist utopians in nineteenth-century Russia. In his 1871 novel, *Demons*, these revolutionaries justify the cooption and perversion of their ideals in the name of social justice with exhaustive research. The theoretician Shigalyov concludes that absolute equality is only possible through unlimited despotism. This is unfortunate but inevitable. One-tenth of mankind, he claims, should be given unlimited freedom. The remaining nine-tenths "must lose their person and turn into something like a herd, and in unlimited obedience, through a series of regenerations, attain to a primeval innocence, something like a primeval paradise—though, by the way, they will have to work" (from Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky's excellent new translation of *Demons*). That these "regenerations" rely on spying, slander and the destruction of higher abilities is beside the point. "Slaves must be equal: there has never yet been either freedom or equality without despotism, but within a herd there must be equality, and this is Shigalyovism!" In its invasiveness and longevity, the Romanian version of Shigalyovism outdid even Dostoevsky's fervid imaginings. Denunciations, threats, and libel did in fact create an equality of the least common denominator in post-war Romania, but, as the exiled writer Norman Manea's novel *The Black Envelope* shows, there was neither regeneration nor innocence, even among the hapless few who did their best to resist the regime's legacy of corruption.

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After suffering four decades of fear, paranoia, and boredom under this most ruthless totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe, the characters in *The Black Envelope* have finally come to realize that there is no escape from the hell that surrounds them. Inner emigration is not an option, for hell is not just others, as Sartre would have it, but has invaded even their most private selves. "Yesterday the disease was still next door or at the next-door neighbor's; today it is inside you and it is too late. The roots of evil are in each prisoner not just in the butchers." Nor does insanity offer escape, for the reality that surrounds them is indistinguishable from madness. The only possible redemption seems to be escaping the boredom—at whatever cost.

The Black Envelope recounts the struggles of several characters to survive within and against this system. Overshadowing them all is the Exemplary Association, a mysterious organization of deaf-mutes in league with the nameless and faceless but all-present authorities. It is an even more chilling organization than the Sect of the Blind in the Argentinian novelist Ernesto Sábato's *On Heroes and Tombs*, for this is not an exclusive association. Membership is also open to those who can hear and speak. Their official newspaper, "Our Life," which celebrates the "spirit of socialist ethics and justice" is even sold in sidewalk kiosks. The members' telltale sign is a tiny scar above the left eyebrow. In this totalitarian society in which nothing is left to chance and nothing is what it seems, the Association is even more insidious than it first appears:

> The association of the underworld, of the underdeveloped, of underhand meanings. . . Behind it, under and above it, there is the NETWORK. The NETWORK is everything. The company, the goal, the structure—none of that counts, even in the case of such an exotic company; the important thing is always the way it relates to the system.

Many parallels can be drawn between Argentina fighting its Dirty War and Ceausescu's regime, but while Sábato bases his fictional portrayal of a self-destructing society on the pessimism and despair under a "black envelope of men suffering from a universal bitterness," Manea's novel depicts this bitterness in many particular manifestations. In the book's central drama, the eponymous black envelope bears a threatening letter which precipitates the murder or suicide of Marcu Vancea, a Jewish Sorbonne-trained philosopher who had hoped to survive the turbulence of the 1940s as a wholesale wine merchant. Whether it was sent by one of his daughter's rejected suitors or by the authorities is never established. But it does succeed in destroying the entire family.

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Marcu's son, Tolea, the novel's most colorful character, is the only one left to bear the family's burden. Now a receptionist in a tourist hotel that reserves rooms by the hour for upper-level party functionaries, this former professor has been banned from his profession for various causes, his suspect bourgeois origins being among the most obvious. Tolea's rebellion and strategy for survival is a calculated carelessness. Although every word he utters can be used against him, he talks compulsively. "In a world where everything seems programmed, even chaos, chance, or surprise," he reasons, "you've got to defy logic and bewilder people. You've got to make the fools believe that you control secret links to which they have no access." Out of the sheer boredom of a hopeless situation, he embarks on the dangerous and futile quest of clearing up his father's death forty years earlier.

Tolea's estranged lover, Irina, an architect who for more mysterious reasons is banned from her profession, works on the staff of the Association's newspaper. Her quiet, passive resistance to the corruption around her can hardly be distinguished from self-destruction, and is no more or less effective than Tolea's. Both are treated by the psychiatrist Dr. Marga who survives by devoting himself to his patients, "the last knights of normality."

Norman Manea's novellas in *Compulsory Happiness* also chronicled the macabre and sometimes surreal aspects of life under totalitarianism, but were slightly more palatable to Western audiences because the symbols and results of corruption were more contained: the trademark trenchcoat of the secret police, a cynical interrogator, a political chameleon. One might suspect after reading *The Black Envelope*'s more detailed and complex treatment of the theme that Manea has disproportionately emphasized the phantasmagoria of this gruesome and still unconcluded chapter of the twentieth century. And yet, even the briefest account of the *Securitate*—the most draconian and invasive secret police in the Eastern Bloc—and its many "volunteer informers" reveals how realistic a picture of this society Manea has drawn.

Take, for example, this novel's bizarre odyssey through the "Reading Service of the Council for Socialist Culture and Education," Ceausescu's censorship bureau whose records are stored in the Archives of Truth. In the manuscript, words denoting the most basic elements of life under Ceausescu's sadistic regime, such as "food lines," "informer," "cold," "dark," "coffee," and "dictator," were deleted. Sentences, even entire paragraphs were rejected. With no trace of irony, Manea's censor "suggested" that eighty percent of this fictional portrait of a society eroded by duplicity and chronic substitution be, well, substituted. A substitute censor was found who could offer, unofficially, compromises acceptable to both the author and the authorities. Following subsequent reports, advice, and even an interview with a highly intelligent, thoroughly cynical agent from the *Securitate*'s "Writers Section," the novel was published in 1986, just as the author was preparing for exile.

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Intrigued by rumors of the book's crippling encounter with the censor or perhaps just hungry for any truth that might survive a struggle with the authorities, the Romanian public devoured the novel. Even in its truncated form, *The Black Envelope* sold out its 26,000 copy print run in a few days. The book is, in fact, three novels: the original manuscript, the Romanian edition, and the partially restored American edition. Its characters, its story, and its history all illustrate the complicity that the regime imposed, directly and indirectly, on all its subjects. "Duplicity," Manea explained in an essay about the novel, "became the disease of the entire country, both at the Party apparatus level and at the level of the masses, who used it for survival." In *The Black Envelope*, the psychiatrist Dr. Marga, a man familiar with emotional compromises whose degree of complicity with or resistance to the authorities is never clarified, tries to convince Tolea that some final boundary between truth and falsehood remains even if it is often crossed. He tells Tolea that "[o]nce they're said, lies take their revenge. They come true. They become reality, and that's the ultimate truth." But his patient sees more clearly. "Reality is not the ultimate truth, Doctor," the dispirited receptionist counters. Tolea later explains that his father,

> the philosopher, based himself on corruption. That's why he got involved in wine, to have money that would be of help in hard times. Because the barbarians were coming: he knew the hysterias of history and of this part of the world. And where there's no morality, not even corruption can always solve things. A society without principles! That's what Papa was afraid of: that in madness not even corruption would help any longer.

Norman Manea has written a dark, uncomfortable book. *The Black Envelope* is impressive, but not a pleasure to read. Its form echoes and reinforces its unsettling truths. Readers may become irritated or confused by this novel's opaqueness and surreal atmosphere, but it offers no refuge in comforting commonplaces about the literature of resistance: that an artist can create works of art directed against a repressive regime and prevent them from becoming contaminated by that system; or that freedom of expression can cure decades of destruction. As Manea shows, this "society without principles" has corrupted its language as well as the innermost psyches of its subjects. The rot is deep. There are few foundations left upon which to rebuild.

TESS LEWIS

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"He that of repetition is most master"

NEW & SELECTED POEMS. By Donald Justice. Knopf. $25.00.
DWELLING PLACES: POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS. By David Ferry. University of Chicago Press. $8.95.

> Perhaps
> The man-hero is not the exceptional monster
> But he that of repetition is most master.
> (Wallace Stevens, *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* III.ix)

It sounds odd until you think about it. Repetition (days, seasons, generations, behaviors, memories): to be master of that, ah yes. Or rather, most master. Of poems too, for unless you master the art of repetition both within and between poems, you will never move beyond journeyman-work in poetry. Good poems also remind us of how often we are coerced by—and not masters of—verbal repetition.

Fifteen remarkable new poems open Donald Justice's volume, followed by selections from 1959 on. Memory and dreams, the past both personal and communal, our precious and other dead: all these are Justice's subjects, and all these live in that place the ancients called the underworld. Little wonder that Orpheus has long been a favorite figure. He leads us into this collection through the epigraph, a three-line tour de force:

> Orpheus, nothing to look forward to, looked back.
> They say he sang then, but the song is lost.
> At least he had seen once more the beloved back.

He haunts the new poems: flowers at the mouth of the underworld, here a mineshaft; "The Artist Orpheus," who made up the Eurydice story; a friend recalled, re-called too ("Invitation to a Ghost"), a friend who once dreamt Eurydice preceded *him* ("And you followed, knowing exactly what to expect, and of course she did turn"). More obliquely: a thirtieth-wedding-anniversary poem; "A Man of 1794" approaching the guillotine (compare Orpheus confronting a mob, and severed heads); "Body and Soul," all couplets except for two unrhymed words, "back" and "lost" (look again at the epigraph's end-words). And finally "Sadness."

Yet Justice's is also an ordinary world, which is to say, a world perceived through ordinary mimesis. The thirties are sharply realized in "Cinema and Ballad of the Great Depression," "Banjo Dog Variations" and its tramps, and "Pantoum of the Great Depression." Or see the porches throughout Justice's work. Apparently the South, like Quebec, is (was?) a society of porches.

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Then too, Justice commands an easy, conversational idiom, his art concealing its art. Isn't line one of "The Artist Orpheus" something that anyone might say? "It was a tropical landscape, much like Florida's, which he knew." Yes and no. Justice's two phrasal commas, rather than a single clausal one before "which," offer the resonance of a double meaning. Knowledge of our own underworlds is like that: double, at once familiar and unfamiliar, insinuating itself slowly into everyday awareness like the sinuous rivery rhythms here. The river is double too:

> . . . They glided across a black
> And apathetic river . . . .

Actual river, yes, but also shadowed by the memory of an underworld river, *niger . . . tardaque* (in Virgil's Orpheus and Eurydice story, *Georgics* IV.478-9). We too inhabit ordinary worlds informed by underworlds, by history and myth. (Myths simply repeat the stories of our unrepeatable lives.) Justice lights them for us.

A quiet mastery is at work everywhere, at large and in detail. Mastery of story, including the different sequential stories that poems can tell, according to their arrangement. (See the varied order of Justice's 1979 Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Selected Poems*.) Mastery of rhythm. (See the varied accent in the epigraph, lines one and three playing against the regular iambic pentameter of the middle line, the "song" line.) Mastery of the line-break ("The estranging years that come, / Come and go, and we are home" ["On an Anniversary"]). Mastery of single word, line, grammar, figuration.

One signature of Justice's work is rhyme on repeated end-words, a particularly difficult art in English. It is wonderfully deployed in "Sadness," a poem of (and on) repetition. "Sadness" opens, "Dear ghosts, dear presences, O my dear parents . . . ," then widens both ordinary world and underworld, to close finally on the tears of things. ("Not that they *are* but that they *feel* immense.") Read this poem, slowly and more than once.

David Ferry's excellent collection, *Dwelling Places: Poems and Translations*, speaks with a measured voice, sometimes grave, sometimes tender, sometimes angry with the anger of a strong social conscience. His dwelling places include those places the homeless inhabit and have inhabited, the places of society's outcasts, from classical and biblical times on. "Even unto this present hour we hunger. . . and have no certain dwelling place," the Apostle Paul wrote, and the epigraph repeats. But who are "we" in this book, for example, in the poem "Dives"? The title tests us: one-syllable dwelling places or a two-syllable proper name with a memorable dwelling place and fate? Both surely, and their relation. The epigraph plays repeatedly against all the book's dwelling places, physical and mental. It stands as a rebuke to a nominally if loosely Christian society.

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Like the gifted translator he is, as witness his *Gilgamesh*, Ferry can rehear and renew writing from other times and tongues. Poems by Goethe, Hölderlin, Johnson, and especially the haunting "When We Were Children," here regain their astonishing force.

Ferry works expertly with repetition, and not only between poems. His distinctive sentence-rhythm likes grammatical apposition, and his distinctive double phrasing (e.g. in the X of the Y) likes to repeat something earlier in the X or Y. The effect resembles back-stitching: a texture strongly sewn, by means of going back before going forward. The lines press forward rhythmically, as against a barrier, somewhat like Geoffrey Hill's lines. How much Ferry knows about this. See the *Gilgamesh* poetic line. Or see the central trope in "A Young Woman": "that she should falter / at all through this phase, / pressing, with hand outstretched . . . ." (The grammar itself quietly falters, before turning to the imperative of blessing—a figure for the poem's holding back from any thoughtless move toward a young woman who must make her own way. Such intelligence, and intelligent love, runs all through this work.)

This is a poetry of restraint, speaking through its silences as much as its sounds. Both elegiac and love poems are compressed, almost Japanese in effect, though the likely influence here is the compactness of Latin. (Ferry has just finished translating Horace's odes.) So also, the structure of Latin grammar and the accentual equivalent of classical meters may inform Ferry's distinctive line- and sentence-rhythms.

As with Justice, the sestina with its repeated end-words is a congenial form. "The Guest Ellen at the Supper for Street People" is one of the best ever. Body, voice, unclean, torment, event, enchantment: the six end-words develop an ever-enlarging story. Ferry repeats the phrase, "unclean spirits," itself repeated in the New Testament (they possess what we call the mentally disturbed), and the archaic, more humane phrase comes to sound increasingly right. By the end, we want to rehabilitate rather than update the old, wider, more humane language. How we shelter ourselves with our abstract, clinical vocabulary. That too is a dwelling place, one of the dwelling places of language.

Both Donald Justice and David Ferry offer masterwork: so deceptively simple that sensation-mongers will speed past, so authoritative that repeated readings do not exhaust it.

ELEANOR COOK

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The State of Poetry

THE REDRESS OF POETRY. By Seamus Heaney. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. $22.00
PROOFS AND THEORIES: ESSAYS ON POETRY. By Louise Glück. Ecco Press. $22.00
THE CURE OF POETRY IN AN AGE OF PROSE: MORAL ESSAYS ON THE POET'S CALLING. By Mary Kinzie. University of Chicago Press. $54.00

In his criticism, T.S. Eliot once asserted, a poet "is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write." Far from deploring this lack of disinterestedness, Eliot felt that the critical writings of poets "owe a great deal of their interest" to this implicit self-reference, and no doubt many readers are led to Seamus Heaney's prose out of a desire to learn more about the writer of the poems. A good deal about Heaney's poetics is to be learned, if somewhat obliquely, in *The Redress of Poetry*; readers will also find that the qualities of sympathy, generosity, and curiosity that mark his poetry are equally on display in Heaney's prose. Readers who come to Heaney's essays to learn more about their writer will find themselves led outward by his sensitive appreciations to new worlds of poetic pleasure.

The gates to pleasure, though, in our moment seem guarded by some severe angels indeed, and Heaney clearly feels he must take cognizance of them at the outset. The volume's first essay, which shares its title, sees poetry pressured between the immediacy of political demands, and the corrosive skepticism that characterizes the postmodern intellect. Against these pressures Heaney asserts an ideal of poetry not as "an agent for proclaiming and correcting injustices" but as "a working model of inclusive consciousness," "a revelation of potential that is denied or constantly threatened by circumstances." Heaney defines the mode of "redress" he argues for as one that would "set [poetry] up as its own category, an eminence established and a pressure exercised by distinctly linguistic means." This perspective, of course, is conditioned by Heaney's situation as an Irish Catholic poet who nevertheless refuses to put his poetry into the service of a sectarian program.

But if Heaney has declined to become a spokesman for the nationalist cause, he has just as firmly resisted being defined as a British poet, as an untroubled member of an imperium centered on England. Heaney's own experiences have made him particularly sensitive to the ways that "in emergent cultures the struggle of an individual consciousness towards affirmation and distinctness may be analogous...with a collective straining towards self-

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definition." Relations between the imperial center and the margins are a hidden preoccupation running through much of the volume; most of the poets Heaney treats resisted, or operated at the margins of, "the normative authority of the dominant language or literary tradition." Hugh MacDiarmid is Heaney's most self-conscious objector to the authority of the "normative," but even Elizabeth Bishop, whose imaginative world revolved around the twin poles of Nova Scotia and Brazil, he defines in part through her distance from "the literary life of the States." Heaney is careful, though, not to turn his celebrations of "outsiders" into an argument for parochialism; instead, the local and marginal figure for Heaney as emblems of that world of imaginative freedom where all traditions stand equal. The essay on John Clare offers a moving defense of that poet's linguistic localism as a means to "dream of a world where no language will be relegated," and the chapter on Brian Merriman's *The Midnight Court* places this "poem from beyond the Pale" not merely within a tradition of Gaelic dream-visions but within the whole trajectory of the Orpheus myth, and within a context of sexual politics that makes it seem alive and urgent today. The reader who, upon finishing Heaney's essay, doesn't rush to the library to find the whole of this marvelous poem, is a good deal less suggestible than I.

If Heaney's prose shares the expansiveness, geniality, and muscular eloquence of his verse, Louise Glück's essays, like her poems, are brief, concentrated, and intense. Heaney's figure for the poet is Orpheus, celebrant of the natural world. Glück's emblematic figure is Psyche, visited in the dark by a mysterious, ravishing presence; Psyche who, as Glück puts it, "didn't know what she would find." Glück summons a sense of poetic art as inward, questioning, allied to silence and emptiness; she is interested in the primordial and elemental, in pure situations from which the contingencies of circumstance have been purged.

The subjects of Glück's essays, then, are often abstractions, and the abstractions that engage her imagination are predominantly negative—the book's table of contents reads a bit like a list of the novels Beckett never got around to writing: "The Forbidden," "Disruption, Hesitation, Silence," "Death and Absence," "On Impoverishment." This sympathy with conditions of privation and helplessness underlies her powerful reading of Milton's sonnet "On His Blindness." After a sensitive discussion of the way the prosody of the opening quatrain brings home to the reader the poet's sorrow, Glück meditates on the relation established in the poem between pain and patience. The poem "must convince us of pain" in order to persuade us of the lesson of endurance it teaches: "In the presence of lessons, the possibility of mastery can displace the animal plea for alleviation." Though Glück never remarks on the sonnet's personal resonance, she tells us enough elsewhere in the volume about her struggles with writer's block for us to understand

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something about the power for her of Milton's self-directed injunction to patience. In Glück's eyes, every poet is ultimately something of a stranger to her own gift. Glück's vision of the poet's vocation is far from comforting, but her faith in the value of poetry's hard discipline offers its own inspiration.

Mary Kinzie's book embodies a program in a way neither Heaney's nor Glück's do. *The Cure of Poetry* sounds much like *The Redress of Poetry*, and the range of meanings Kinzie and Heaney mean to evoke by their central terms overlap a good deal, but the emphasis in Kinzie's book falls rather more on a remedy for poetry's current bad condition, as opposed to Heaney's concern with poetry's power to "redress" the world through imaginative understanding. The subtitle, *Moral Essays on the Poet's Calling*, indicates the urgency and seriousness with which she takes the project of poetry's cure. Kinzie is unusual among contemporary poet-critics in her willingness to render negative judgments; the first essay of the volume is titled "The Rhapsodic Fallacy," and its first sentence breaks the bad news: "Contemporary poetry suffers from dryness, prosaism, and imaginative commonplace, but these are hardly its worst features." Throughout her book, Kinzie is concerned to vindicate a poetry of the "complex idea" against what she sees as a devotion to a poetics of spontaneous outpouring prevalent among contemporary American poets. She is Johnsonian in her insistence that bad poems reflect not simply contingent failures of talent or execution, but intellectual and ethical errors.

Kinzie is in fact rather more persuasive when attacking than when praising. Her attacks are effective precisely because they show her to have reached a deep understanding of a poem's ambitions, of the effect it imagines itself to have on a reader. She is devastating in eliciting the core of self-regard and self-indulgence beneath the widespread mode of "ironic memoir" and in deploring the prurience that characterizes the cult of victimization in contemporary verse. Her enthusiasms are less persuasively presented. Essays on Louise Bogan and Howard Nemerov offer rich explorations of their sensibilities and poetic strategies, but make an aesthetic case only obliquely. And while the final chapter promises "a new model of literary apprenticeship," Kinzie makes concrete proposals only in passing: "I would...urge the study of logic, ethics, rhetoric, and metaphysics, and would highly recommend a good knowledge of European art and languages." Kinzie is the director of what many regard as the most intellectually rigorous creative writing program in the country, at Northwestern University; one would be eager to have her lay out a detailed program for reforming MFA education. Even readers unsympathetic to Kinzie's perspective will admire the clarity with which she maps the contemporary poetic landscape, but even her most sympathetic readers might wish that she had spelled out her prescriptions more thoroughly.

VERNON SHETLEY

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

In *Partisan Review* No. 3, Mr. Vladimir Tismaneanu writes: "In the 1960s, Daniel Bell announced the extinction of the modern ideological impetus...According to that view, humanity has ushered in a post-ideological age."

No, no no. In the 1988 re-issue of my book, I write that "there are some books that are better known for their titles than their contents. Mine is one of them."

In the 1960 edition of my book, I wrote: "the extraordinary fact is that while the nineteenth century ideologies...have become exhausted, the rising states of Asia and Africa are fashioning new ideologies...These are the ideologies of industrialization, modernization, Pan-Arabism, color and nationalism" (page 403).

The basic thesis of my book was that an historic crossover had occurred in the West from religion to politics as the means of mobilizing passions and collective sentiments. The English Revolution of Cromwell was carried out in religious terms, with a political undertone. Beginning with the French revolution, the political ideology had become formulated, though with religious undertones. These ideologies were secular religions. What I said, then, was that these ideologies—Marxism-Leninism—had lost their intellectual and emotional power.

Mr. Tismaneanu, as a professor of politics, has an elementary responsibility to read a text if he is to deal with it as an argument. If you set fire to a straw man, it will burn brightly. I understand from the PR note that the article is abridgment of a chapter in a forthcoming book. I despair.

Daniel Bell
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Vladimir Tismaneanu replies:

I am dismayed that a passing reference became such a major bone of contention. I have frequently used Mr. Daniel Bell's *End of Ideology* as a text in my classes. My disagreement with his thesis on the end of the ideological age is not fundamental: my point is that it was only with the breakdown of European Leninist regimes that the era of traditional secular religions has ended. After all, as Mr. Bell admits in his afterword to the 1988 edition of his book, a major criticism of his argument insisted precisely on the rise of radicalisms in the sixties and seventies. Now, he may find this unjustified, but that does not necessarily make it illegitimate or ill-intended.

My article mentioned only one main implication of Professor Bell's approach to the extinction of modern radical ideologies. In fact, my interpretation of the revolutions of 1989 insists on the twilight of the mobilizational impact of the official ideology in Leninist regimes. In my forthcoming book I argue that new political mythologies have emerged in the former communist countries; that in post-communism, history or ideology have not come to an end, but have made a spectacular and dangerous comeback and that the new salvationist mythologies share with the old-fashioned universalistic ideologies the ambition to be all-embracing and all-explanatory.

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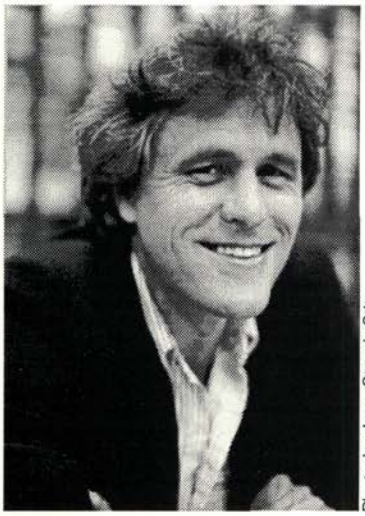

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